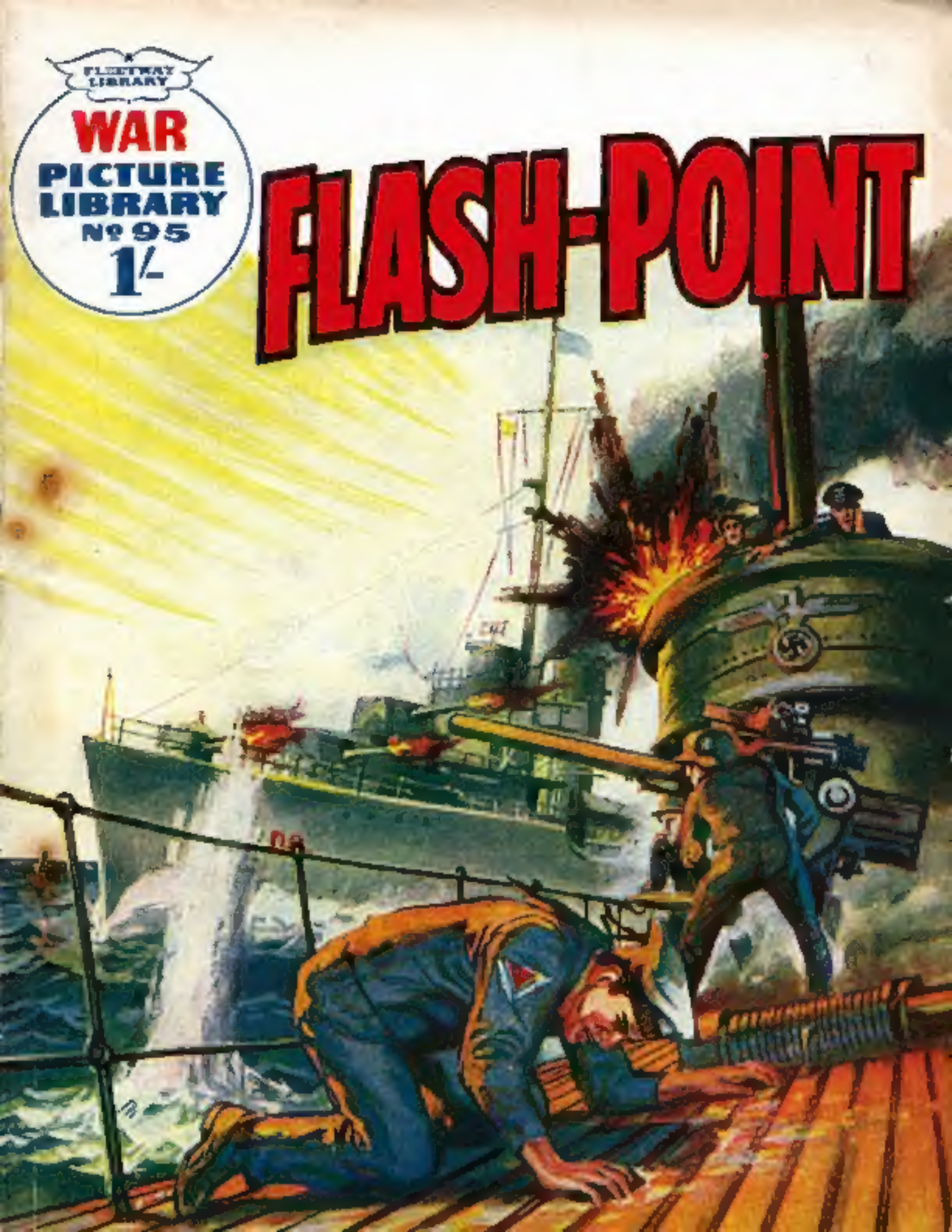
FLEETWAY LIBRARY

WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No 95

1/-

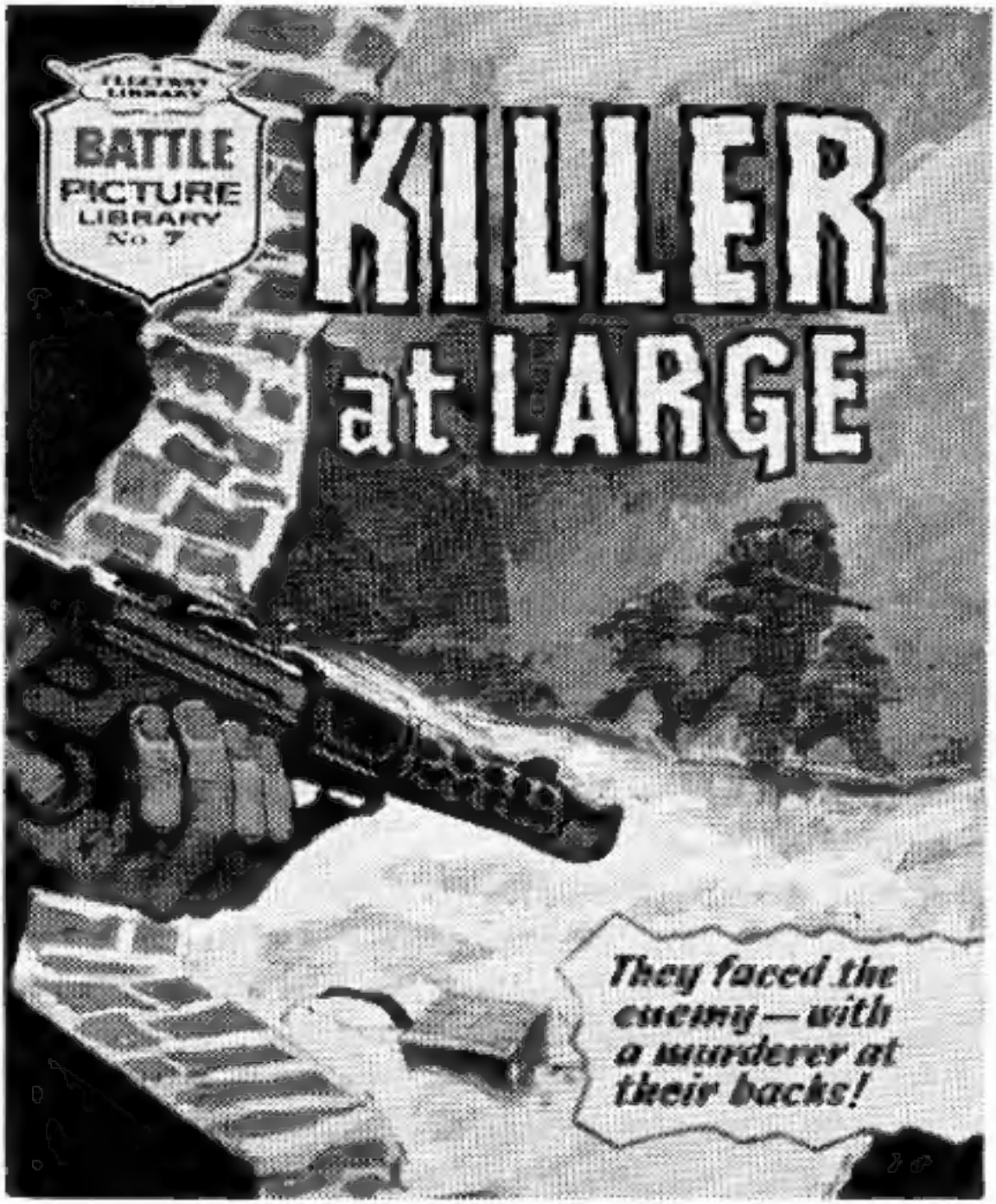
# FLASH-POINT



# TENSE... TOUGH... TERRIFIC!

# BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY

**Issues Numbers 7 & 8 On Sale: MONDAY 17th APRIL**




## TWO Dramatic, All-action Issues Every Month

# FLASH-POINT

© Fleetway Publications Ltd., 1961

# Chapter 1. COMMERCE RAIDER

COURAGEOUSLY BUT IN VAIN, THE FEW BRITISH MERCHANT VESSELS WHICH HAD HURRIEDLY BEEN ARMED IN THOSE FIRST MONTHS OF THE WAR TRIED TO HIT BACK AT THE POWERFUL ENEMY.

GUN CREW, STAND FAST! EVERY OTHER AVAILABLE MAN – TO THE HOSES!

BUT THE PINPRICKS OF THE CARGO SHIPS' TINY ARMAMENT SERVED ONLY TO DRAW THE GERMAN ARMED MERCHANTMAN'S FIRE MORE HEAVILY UPON THEM. THE RESULT WAS INEVITABLE. . . .

THE SHIP GAVE A CONVULSIVE SHUDDER AS ANOTHER LARGE SHELL PUNCHED INTO HER FIRE-RAVAGED DECK AND HER BOWS SIT DEEP INTO THE ATLANTIC ROLLERS. . .
WHERE'S THE PERISHING NAVY WHILE JERRY'S BASHING THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF US?
THEY WERE HUNTING A U-BOAT CONTACT ROUND THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONVOY - PROBABLY A DECOY!

HAVING STALKED AND SUNK YET ANOTHER VICTIM, THE POWERFUL GERMAN RAIDER, ALTERMARK, SLUNK BACK TOWARDS THE WESTERING SKYLINE.

THE BRITISH CORVETTE SNIPE, COMMANDED BY LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER G. H. WOOLRIDGE, R.N., WAS DETACHED FROM THE CONVOY TO FIND THE RAIDER.
PORT TEN!
TEN OF THE PORT WHEEL ON, SIR!

STANDING ON THE CORVETTE'S TINY BRIDGE BESIDE HIS SKIPPER, LIEUTENANT LEE RAYNOR RAKED THE REDDENING HORIZON WITH PRACTISED EYE.
WE'LL BE LUCKY IF WE SIGHT THE BLIGHTER BEFORE DARK, SIR!
MAYBE THE FRENCHMAN WILL CUT HIM OFF.
RNR

A FRENCH CRUISER, THE *MARECHAL BENIER*, WAS UNDERSTOOD TO BE COMING UP FROM THE SOUTH AND LIEUTENANT LEE RAYNOR SPOKE OF ITS APPROACH WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM.

JUST OUR LUCK IF THE FRENCHMAN GETS THERE FIRST, SIR!

BUT DARKNESS FELL AND THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THE ENEMY—NOR OF THE FRENCH CRUISER. LEE TOOK THE MIDDLE WATCH BUT WHEN FOUR O'CLOCK BROUGHT HIS RELIEF, HE STAYED ON, FORCING HIS PRICKING EYES TO PENETRATE THE MORNING MIST. AN HOUR LATER, HIS VIGIL WAS REWARDED.

BY GOLLY, THERE SHE IS—THE RAIDER! ACTION STATIONS!

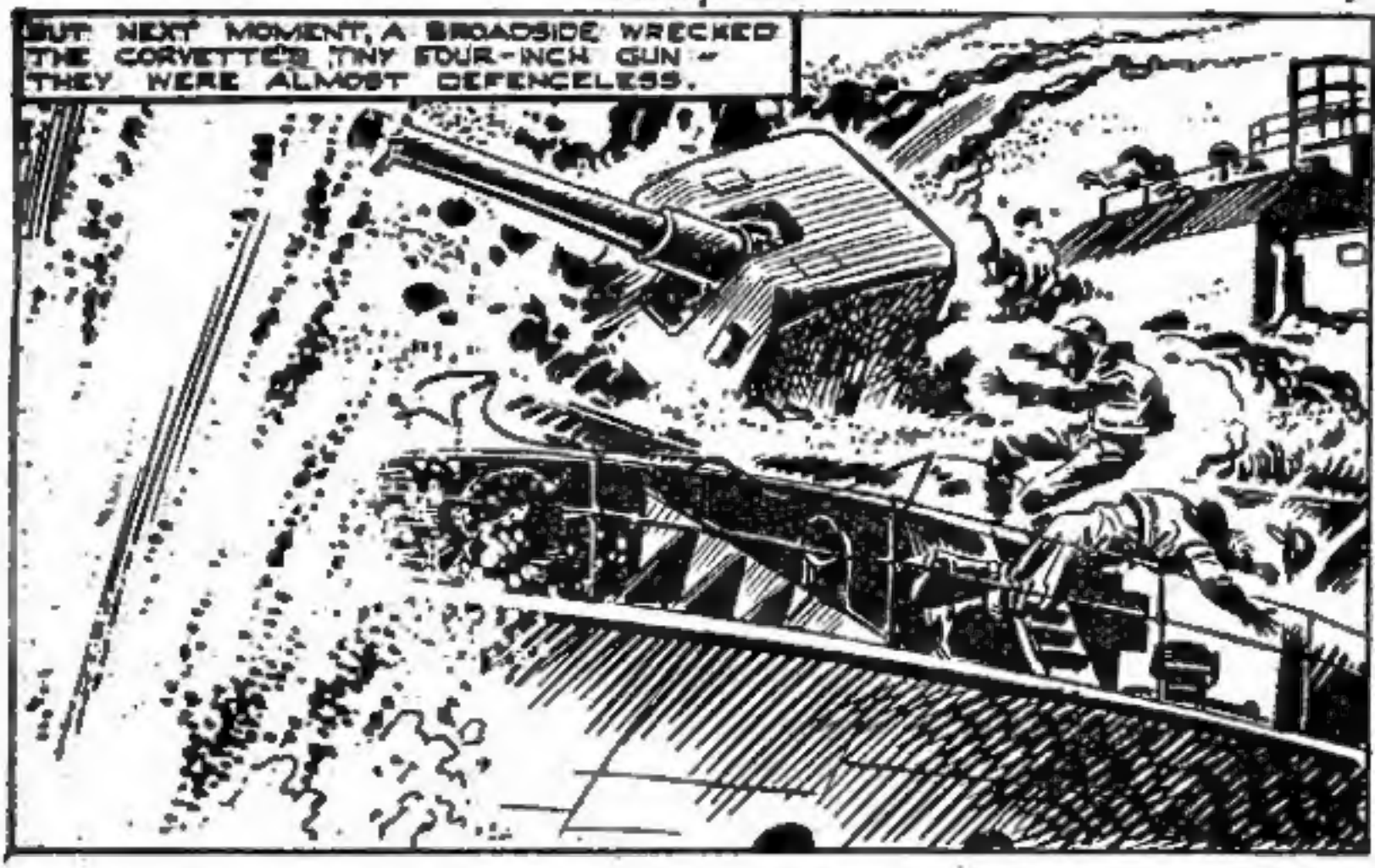
INSTANTLY, WITH ALARM BELLS JANGLING, THE CORVETTE *SNIPE* SPRANG TO LIFE.

LIKE SOME GREAT BEAST, DISTURBED AND VENGEFUL, THE GERMAN *ALTERMARK* TURNED WITH DELIBERATION. SUDDENLY HER GUNS FLAMED. . .

FEUER!

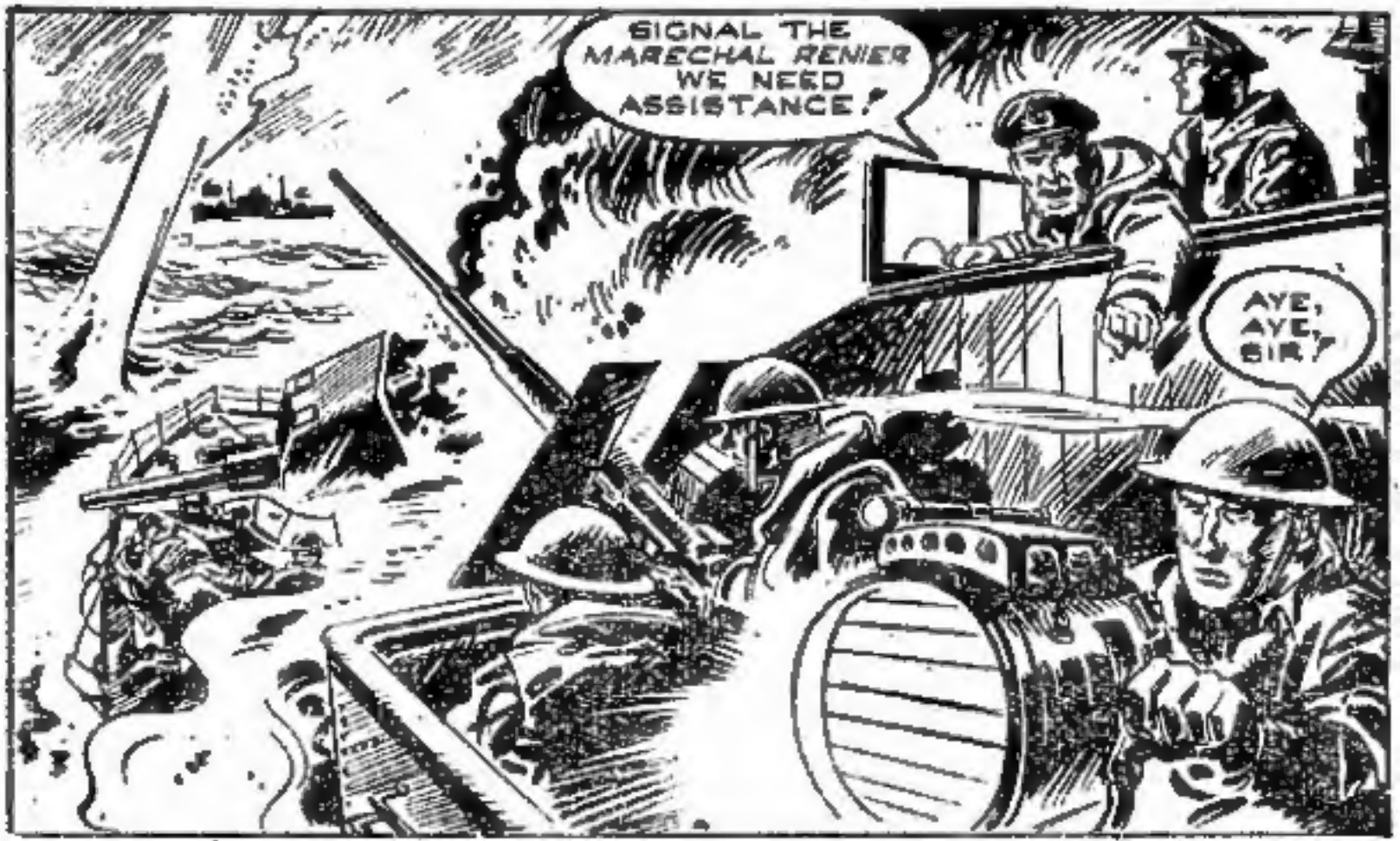
THE ALTERMARK'S FIRST SALVO SPOKE FOR HER MARKSMANSHIP.
THESE JERRY GUNNERS AREN'T JUST LEARNING, SKIPPER!
FIVE-POINT-NINES OR I'M A DUTCHMAN. THEY CAN OUT-SHOOT US BY A THOUSAND YARDS!

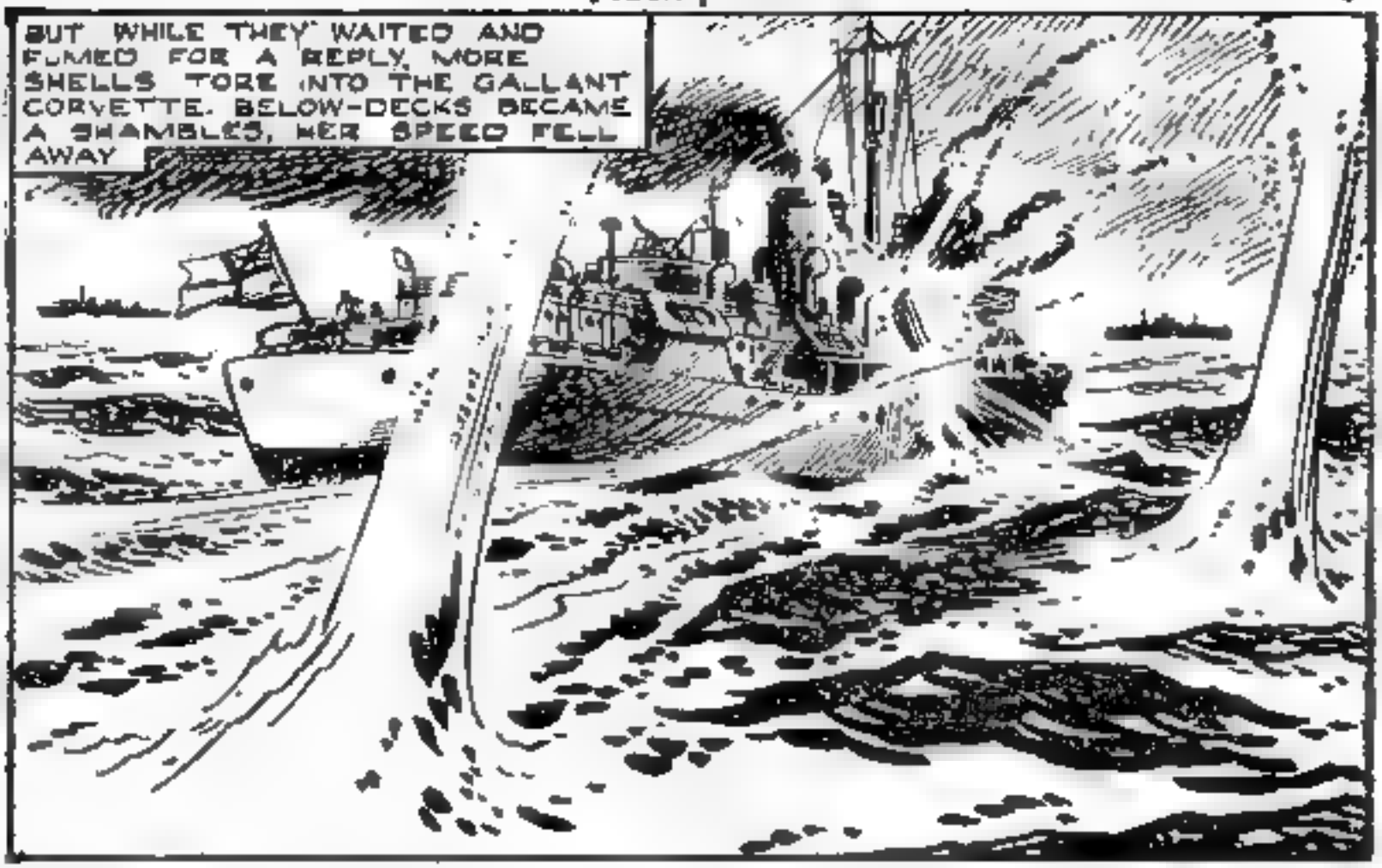
THERE WAS STILL NO SIGN OF THE FRENCH CRUISER, AND THE LIGHT OF COMBAT GLEAMED IN LEE RAYNOR'S EYE.
WHAT A FEATHER IN OUR CAPS, SKIPPER, IF WE SANK THIS JERRY ALL ON OUR OWNSOME!
NOT MUCH HOPE OF THAT WITH OUR PEA-SHOOTER, NUMBER ONE, BUT WE MAY BE ABLE TO DELAY HER WHILE THE MARECHAL RENIER CLOSES WITH HER.


BUT NEXT MOMENT, A BROADSIDE WRECKED THE CORVETTE'S TINY FOUR-INCH GUN — THEY WERE ALMOST DEFENCELESS.

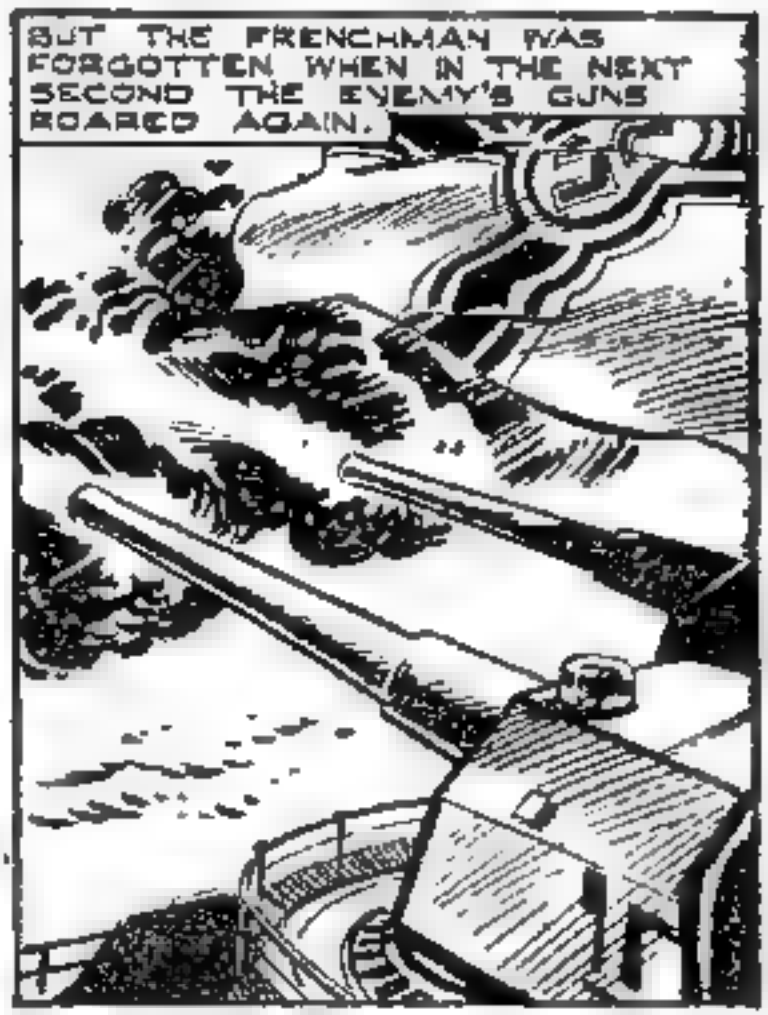
WOOLRIDGE TURNED TO HIS YOUNG LIEUTENANT AND HIS VOICE WAS SAVAGE WITH ANGER. . .
WHERE THE DEVIL'S THAT FRENCHMAN?
NO SIGN OF HER YET, SIR.

SEVERAL MORE ENEMY SHELLS DRENCHED THEM WITH SPRAY. THEN SUDDENLY, ABOVE THE DIN, CAME LEE'S SHOUT...
THAT'S HER~ IT MUST BE~THE MARECHAL RENIER!
BUT AS LEE FOCUSED HIS GLASSES, A GASP BROKE FROM HIM...
BUT SHE'S STEAMING THE WRONG WAY~SHE'S GOING PAST US!
THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THE FRENCH WARSHIP'S MASSIVE SUPER-STRUCTURE, THE POWERFUL GUNS.


SIGNAL THE MARECHAL RENIER WE NEED ASSISTANCE!
AYE, AYE, SIR!

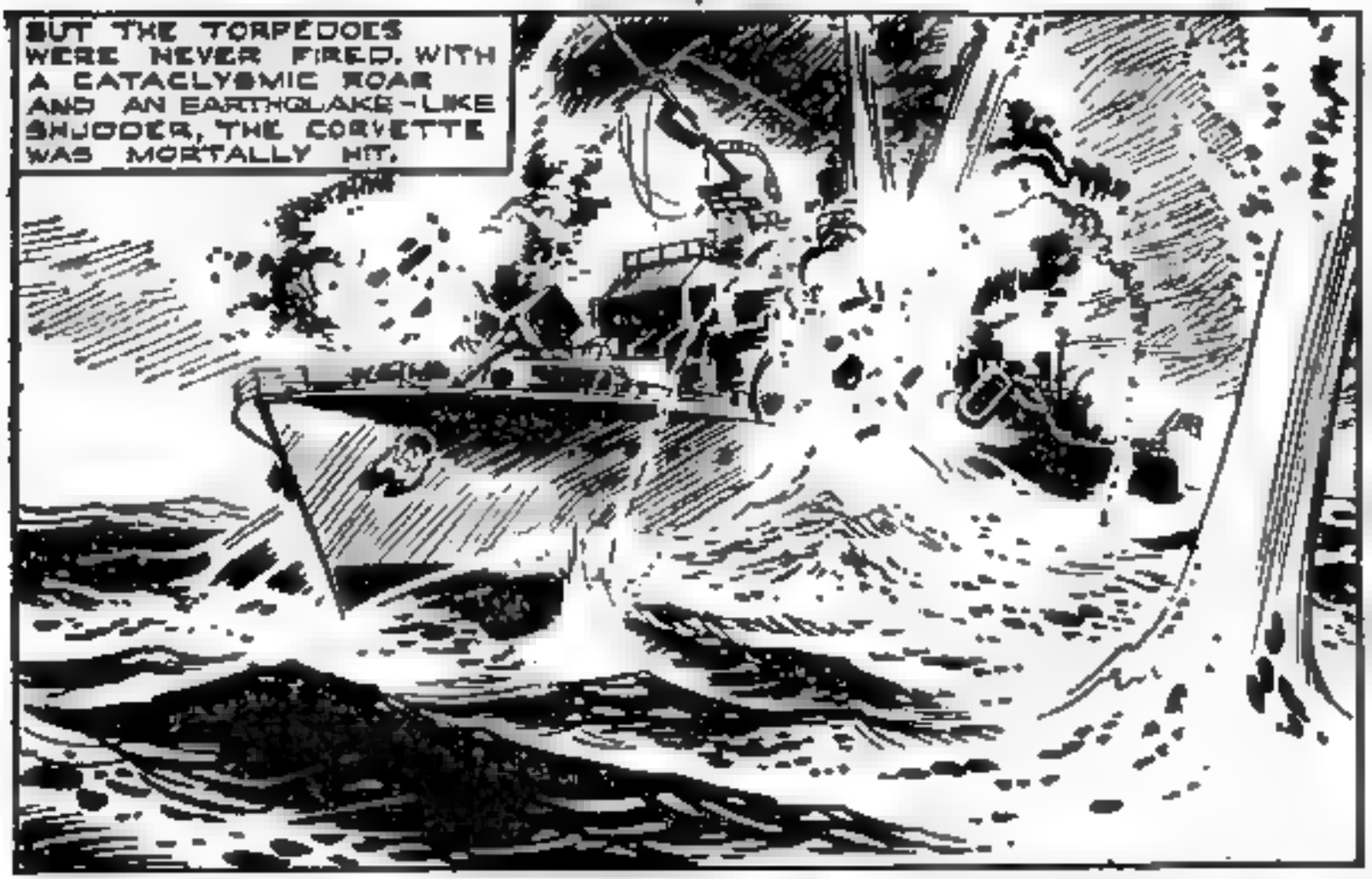

BUT WHILE THEY WAITED AND FUMED FOR A REPLY, MORE SHELLS TORE INTO THE GALLANT CORVETTE. BELOW-DECKS BECAME A SHAMBLES, HER SPEED FELL AWAY

LEE SPELT OUT THE FRENCHMAN'S REPLY. THEN HE WHIPPED ROUND WITH SHOCK WRITTEN ALL OVER HIS FACE...
THEY SAY THEY CAN'T HELP...THEY'VE BEEN ORDERED TO PORT!
WHAT?


BUT THE FRENCHMAN WAS FORGOTTEN WHEN IN THE NEXT SECOND THE ENEMY'S GUNS ROARED AGAIN.

AND ONCE AGAIN THE NAZI GUNNERS FOUND THEIR MARK.

YET STILL THE GALLANT LITTLE SHIP BORE ON...
WE MUST GO IT ALONE! ANOTHER TWO THOUSAND YARDS AND WE'LL TRY A TORPEDO!
I'D LIKE TO TORPEDO THAT FRENCHMAN!


BUT THE TORPEDOES WERE NEVER FIRED. WITH A CATACLYSMIC ROAR AND AN EARTHQUAKE-LIKE SHUDDER, THE CORVETTE WAS MORTALLY HIT.

WOOLRIDGE MADE HIS GRIM DECISION...
ABANDON SHIP, NUMBER ONE?
ABANDON SHIP!

THE SURVIVORS LEAPED FOR THEIR LIVES FROM THE SHELL-SHATTERED BLAZING SHIP . . .
JUMP, SHORTY!

SATISFIED THAT ALL LIVING SOULS WERE AWAY SAVE THE SKIPPER, RAYNOR MADE HIS BID FOR LIFE
QUICK, MISTER RAYNOR, SIR!
COMING, CHIEFY!

A STIFF BREEZE ROSE TO WHIP THE SEA AND TO SCATTER THE BOBBING HEADS AND THEIR PITIFUL SCRAPS OF FLOTSAM. LEE RAYNOR AND HIS LITTLE PARTY LOOKED ABOUT WITH GLOOMY EYES.
I DON'T SEE A SOUL!
LET'S HOPE THEY'RE ALL AS LUCKY AS US.

THE CARLEY FLOAT DRIFTED ALL THAT DAY AT THE MERCY OF WIND AND TIDE. BUT THE FAINT GLIMMER OF DAWN BROUGHT WITH IT A WELCOME SIGHT...
HEY LOOK..WE'RE SAVED!
IT'S A DESTROYER!
BUT WILL THEY SEE US?

SUDDENLY SOMEONE RECOGNISED THE FLAG FLYING AT THE SHIP'S PEAK AND THEIR HOARSE CHEERS DIED IN THEIR THROATS...
IT'S ANOTHER FROGGIE!
BY HEAVENS,YES ..A FRENCHMAN!
HMS
HMS
ONE QUESTION FLASHED ACROSS EVERY MANS MIND - WOULD THIS FRENCH WARSHIP PASS THEM CALLOUSLY BY AS HAD THE MARECHAL RENEQ?

FOR A SICKENING MOMENT IT SEEMED LIKELY SHE WOULD. FRANTICALLY THEY WAVED AND SHOUTED UNTIL AT LAST THE NEWCOMER'S KNIFE-EDGED BOWS SLOWLY SWUNG THEIR WAY
127
SLOW BOTH... DOUCEMENT... GENTLY!

LEE RAYNOR'S SHIVERING BUT THANKFUL PARTY WAS MADE COMFORTABLE BETWEEN DECKS WHILE LEE HIMSELF WAS TAKEN TO THE CAPTAIN'S CRAMPED QUARTERS THERE HE WAS WELCOMED BY CAPTAINE EMILE DURAND BUT THE BRITISH OFFICER COULD NOT SUPPRESS A BITING COMMENT ON THE PREVIOUS DAY'S ACTION.
A FINE ALLY YOUR CHAPS TURNED OUT TO BE! THE *MARECHAL RENIER* WOULDN'T HELP US WHEN WE WERE BEING BATTERED TO PIECES. SHE'D BEEN ORDERED TO PORT, OR SOME SUCH NONSENSE.
PLAINLY, MON AMI, YOU DO NOT KNOW OF THE TRAGEDY THAT HAS BEFALLEN FRANCE

HAVE YOU NOT HEARD? FRANCE HAS SURRENDERED!

IN DULL, LISTLESS TONES, EMILE DURAND WENT ON TO EXPLAIN...
EVERY FRENCH SHIP LIKE THE MARECHAL RENIER IS ORDERED TO PORT. I MUST MAKE FOR LORIENT DOUBTLESS TO BE IMMOBILISED.
BUT WHY... WHY?
BREST
ST. LORIENT
AZAIRE

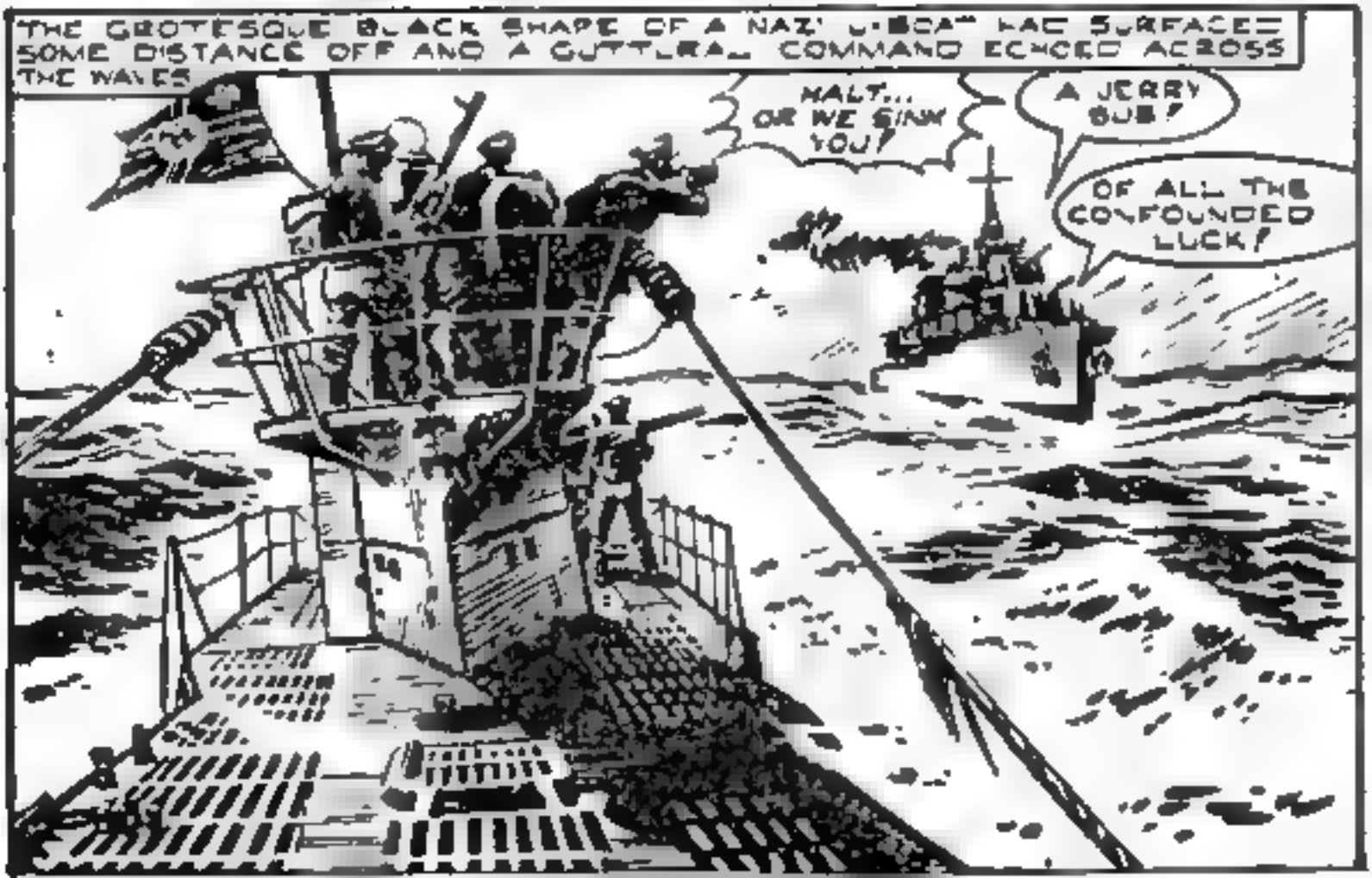
LEE WAS HORRIFIED.
WHY THE BLAZES DON'T YOU MAKE FOR A BRITISH PORT— THERE'S NOTHING TO STOP YOU! THEN YOU CAN FIGHT ON!
YOU EXPECT ME TO DISOBEY ORDERS, M'SIEU?
EMILE DURAND WAS AS MUCH THE PRODUCT OF A PROUD NAVAL TRADITION AS LEE HIMSELF. WHATEVER HIS PERSONAL FEELINGS HE WAS UNDER OATH TO OBEY.

FURTHER ARGUMENTS PROVING EQUALLY FUTILE ICILY REQUESTED TO SEE HIS MEN. THEIR CHEERY GRINS FADED WHEN HE BROKE THE NEWS
SO HERE AS GOOD AS COOPED UP IN A PRISON SHIP BOUND FOR LORIENT DOUBTLESS TO BE HANDED OVER TO THE JERRIES.
PRISONERS~ US?

THERE WAS AN OUTBURST OF PROTESTS...
A P.O.W. CAMP! BLOW THAT FOR A LARK, SIR!
WE'D RATHER BE BACK IN THE SEA!
I'VE ALREADY THOUGHT OF THAT, CHIEFY. I'M GOING TO DEMAND A BOAT AND PROVISIONS AND CAST OURSELVES OFF.

IN TRUCULENT MOOD, THE PARTY PUT THEIR DEMANDS TO CAPTAIN DURAND
...WE SHALL ALSO WANT A SIGNAL SENT OUT, GIVING OUR POSITION WELL SOON BE PICKED UP BY A BRITISH SHIP
C'EST BIEN. IF THAT IS YOUR WISH, MESSIEURS

BUT AT THAT MOMENT, THERE CAME A DISTANT REPORT AND A GEYSER OF WATER ERUPTED CLOSE TO THE SHIP'S SIDE
MON DIEU! WE ARE BEING SHELLED!


THE GROTESQUE BLACK SHAPE OF A NAZI U-BOAT HAD SURFACED SOME DISTANCE OFF AND A GUTTURAL COMMAND ECHOED ACROSS THE WAVES
HALT... OR WE SINK YOU!
A JERRY SUB!
OF ALL THE CONFOUNDED LUCK!

# Chapter 2. BID FOR FREEDOM

FRANCE HAD BEEN DEFEATED - THESE MEN WERE THE VICTORS. THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE EMILE DURAND COULD DO BUT BRING H.S SHIP TO A STANDSTILL. LEE JOINED THE GRIM FRENCHMAN AT THE RAILS, CHOKING BACK HIS ANGER AT THE SIGHT OF THE SNEERING NAZIS APPROACHING IN THE DINGHY.

A ROPE-LADDER, YOU FRENCH DUMKOPFS! I'M COMING ABOARD!

DURAND MET HIS ARROGANT VISITOR WITH A STERN FACE, REFUSING THE HAND MOCKINGLY HELD OUT . . .

I AM UNTER-OFFIZIER UHLMANN-ERNST UHLMANN. I AM TO SEE THAT YOU GET SAFELY TO PORT, MEIN FREUND! I SHALL PUT A PRIZE CREW ABOARD.

THE YOUNG GERMAN UNTER-OFFIZIER OBVIOUSLY REVELLED IN HIS NEW-FOUND AUTHORITY. . .
YOU ARE NOW THE SERVANTS OF OUR MIGHTY FUEHRER. YOU WILL OBEY MY ORDERS. FIRST I WILL INSPECT YOU. ACHTUNG!

THE NAZI STRUTTED ALONG THE LINES OF SCOWLING FRENCHMEN UNTIL HE CAME TO THE BRITISH. AN AMUSED SNEER PLAYED OVER HIS THICK LIPS. . .
AH, THE ENGLANDER NAVY... AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE, LIEUTENANT. THE WAR IS OVER FOR YOU, I FEAR.
MAYBE- BUT GERMANY HASN'T WON IT YET!

THE GERMAN LAUGHED DERSIVELY AND WHEN HIS MEN HAD HAULED UP THEIR FLAG ABOVE THE FRENCH, HE SALUTED IT WITH TRUE NAZI ZEAL.
HEIL, HITLER!
THIS HAS PUT THE TIN HAT ON ANY CHANCE WE HAD OF GETTING AWAY!

A FEW MOMENTS LATER, THE SIGHT OF THE GERMAN SUBMARINE MOVING LEISURELY AWAY WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE SPARTED LEE RAYNOR. WITH A MUFFLED CRY OF ANGER HE LEAPT TOWARDS A QUICK-FIRING GUN.
NO U-BOAT'S GETTING THAT CLOSE TO THE BRITISH NAVY WITHOUT PAYING FOR IT!

BUT QUICK AS LEE WAS, EMILE DURAND WAS A SECOND QUICKER.
NON, NON! THAT WAY IS DEATH FOR US ALL! HAVE PATIENCE!

AS THEY STRUGGLED TOGETHER, UHLMANN SPRANG AND SWUNG HIS LUGER, BUTT FIRST, AT THE ENGLISHMAN'S HEAD.
ENGLANDER SWINE!

WHEN HE RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS, LEE FOUND HIMSELF LOCKED BELOW DECKS WITH HIS CREW. THE STEADY THRUM OF TURBINES TOLD HIM THAT THE SHIP WAS MOVING.
PRETTY NASTY KNOCK YOU HAD, SIR.
HOW'S IT FEELING, MISTER RAYNOR?
I'LL BE OKAY SOON

ON BEING TOLD WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM, LEE'S PAINS WERE ALMOST FORGOTTEN IN HIS DISGUST...
IF THAT CHICKEN-HEARTED DURAND HADN'T STOPPED ME I WOULD HAVE DRILLED THAT U-BOAT LIKE A COLLANDER NO WONDER THE FRENCH COLLAPSED!

ABOUT MIDDAY, THE PRISONERS WERE GIVEN A MEAL - AND WERE VISITED BY DURAND AND THE DETESTED UHLMANN. AT ONCE THERE WAS A HEATED EXCHANGE OF WORDS...
SO IT IS INSOLENCE, YES? WATCH YOUR STUPID TONGUE, ENGLANDER!
I DEMAND DECENT CONDITIONS. WE'VE GOT TO HAVE FRESH AIR.
ALL THE TIME EMILE DURAND STAYED QUIET. NONE GUESSED THE THOUGHTS BEHIND THOSE DARK INTELLIGENT EYES.

WITH A FINAL OUTBURST OF NAZI ARROGANCE, UHLMANN LEFT WITH DURAND, LOCKING THE DOOR BEHIND THEM. BUT A MOMENT LATER, THE FRENCHMAN WAS BACK . . .
PARDON, M'SIEU... I FORGOT MY CAP MERCI BEAUCOUP!

PUZZLED, LEE STARED AFTER DURAND — THEN, REALISATION DAWNED ON HIM . . .
HE'S LEFT THE DOOR OPEN!
MUST 'AVE DONE IT ON PURPOSE, SIR!

WARILY THEY LET THEMSELVES OUT AND CREPT THROUGH THE SHIP — AND STRANGELY ENOUGH, NOT ONE OF THE FRENCH CREW SEEMED TO NOTICE THEM
DURAND MUST HAVE TOLD 'EM TO TURN A BLIND EYE.
PONT

THEY ROUNDED A CORNER AND CAME UPON SOMETHING WHICH REMOVED ALL DOUBTS
WEAPONS!
LUMME!
HELP YOURSELVES, LADS!

ARMED AND WITH THEIR FIGHTING BLOOD ROUSED, THE BRITISH SAILORS MADE FOR THE DECK. IMMEDIATELY, THEY WERE CHALLENGED BY A GERMAN SAILOR ..
HIMMEL! AAH!
IT'S YOU OR ME, FRITZ!

THE SHOTS BROUGHT OTHER [illegible] RUNNING - AND THE BATTLE WAS JOINED.
AH, THERE'S UHLMANN!

THE GERMAN SNATCHED HIS LUGER FROM ITS HOLSTER - BUT BEFORE HIS FINGER COULD TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGER...
ENGLANDER SWINE! YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS!

LEE SPUN THE GERMAN ROUND AND SMASHED A BONE-CRACKING SWING TO HIS JAW...

LEAVING THE NAZI SENSELESS, LEE LOOKED AROUND TO FIND THAT HIS MEN NEEDED NO HELP FOR THE DECK WAS LITTERED WITH RECUMBENT GERMAN FORMS. THE BRITISHERS EAGERLY MADE FOR THE RAILS AND THERE FOUND A BOAT ALL READY AND PROVISIONED.
COR, SHE'S ALL SET TO GO
THANKS A LOT, DURAND!
LEE COULD NOT SEE THE FRENCHMAN BUT HE KNEW HE MUST BE WATCHING SOMEWHERE.

THEN LEE CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE STILL DAZED UHLMANN AND HIS EYES HARDENED...
UP, YOU! YOU'RE COMING WITH US. I'LL HAVE YOU SALUTING THE BRITISH FLAG IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!

AS THEY PULLED AWAY FROM THE FRENCH DESTROYER...
I RECKON COURAGE TAKES ALL KINDS OF SHAPES. WE ALL OWE THAT FRENCHMAN A LOT...MAYBE OUR VERY LIVES!

# Chapter 3. SHAMEFUL MISSION

COMMANDER MURRAY LISTENED INTENTLY TO LEE'S STORY WHEN HE WAS BROUGHT TO THE BRIDGE OF THE FRIGATE.
ADMIRAL BANKS WILL WANT TO HEAR ALL THIS. WE'RE KNOWN AS 'Y' FORCE AND WERE LOOKING FOR FRENCH WARSHIPS. COME AND HAVE A HOT COCOA AND I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT IT
THANK YOU, SIR!

WHAT COMMANDER MURRAY HAD TO SAY WAS REPEATED BY ADMIRAL BANKS HIMSELF THAT SAME AFTERNOON ABOARD THE BATTLESHIP VALOROUS..
YES, THE GRIM TRUTH IS THAT FRANCE HAS COLLAPSED AND HITLER HAS ORDERED ALL FRENCH WARSHIPS TO PORT. IT'S OUR JOB TO PERSUADE THEM TO JOIN THE BRITISH FLEET INSTEAD.

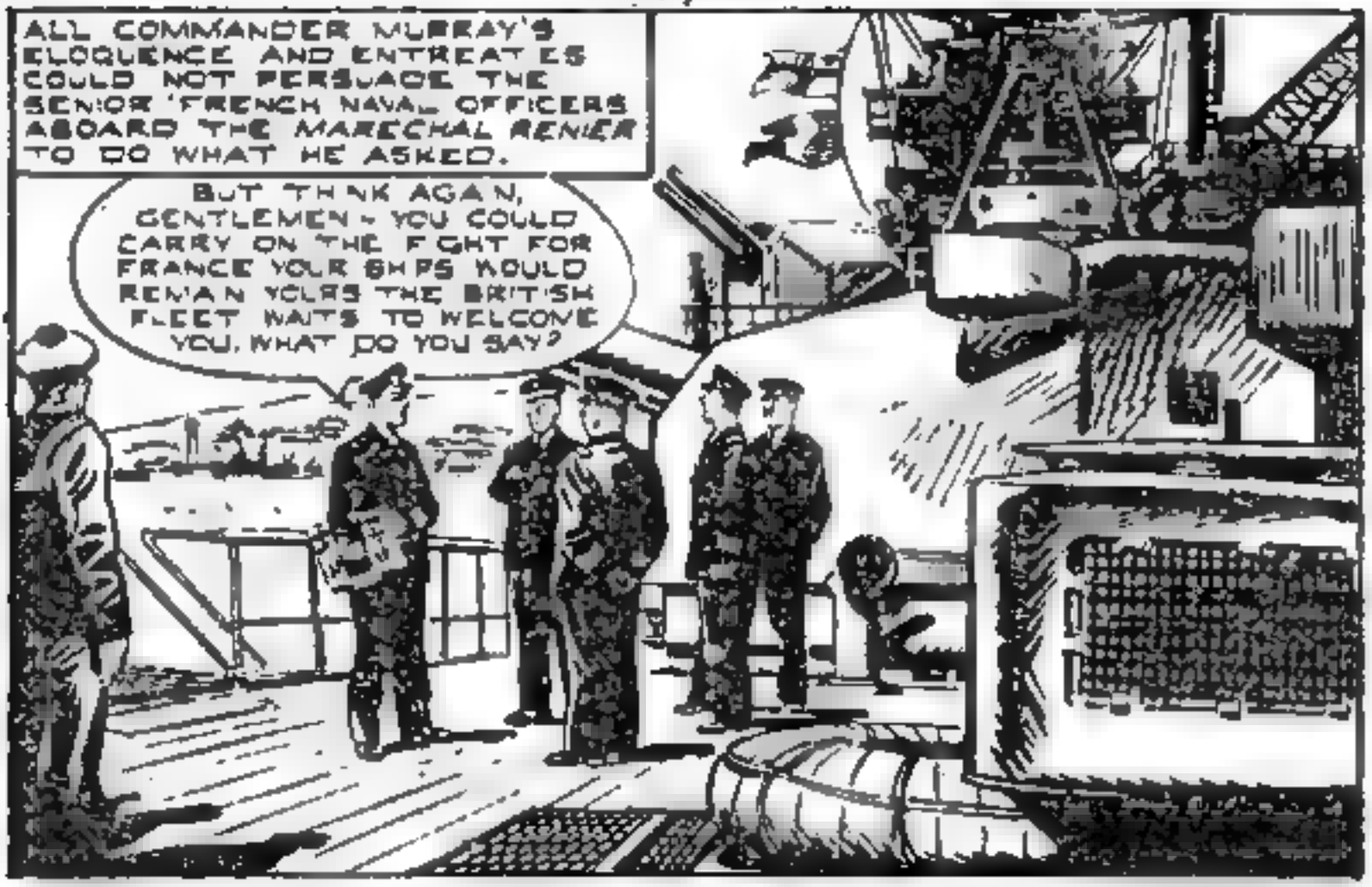
THE ADMIRAL ROSE AND POINTED TO THE CHART DESTINATION . . . LORIENT
HENCE OUR INTEREST IN YOUR STORY, RAYNOR. IT CONFIRMS OUR BELIEF THAT UNITS OF THE FRENCH FLEET ARE MAKING FOR LORIENT... INCLUDING THAT FINE CRUISER, THE MARECHAL RENIER.
FRANC

WHEN THE BIG MAN NODDED FOR LEE TO LEAVE, THE LEUTENANT VENTURED ONE ANXIOUS QUESTION...
BUT SUPPOSING THE FRENCH REFUSE TO SURRENDER, SIR...
...THEN IT WILL BE MY SHAMEFUL AND UNPLEASANT DUTY TO SINK THEM WITHOUT ARGUMENT!

LEE RAYNOR RETURNED TO THE GADFLY A WORRIED MAN. HE KNEW WHAT THE PROUD EMILE DURAND WOULD DO...
HE WON'T SURRENDER TO FORCE NOR WILL THE REST OF THEIR FLEET, AND THEN...

AT DAWN THE NEXT MORNING, ADMIRAL BANKS MADE HIS PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNENVIABLE TASK THAT LAY AHEAD. FIRST, HE DESPATCHED THE FRIGATE GADFLY TO CARRY TO THE FRENCH FLEET THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S ULTIMATUM...
WE'RE WITHIN GUN RANGE OF LORIENT NOW, SIR.
RIGHT. WE'LL STAND OFF THE COAST AND AWAIT EVENTS.
HMS
VERY GOOD, SIR.

THE FRIGATE ANCHORED A MILE OFF-SHORE AND HER COMMANDER SET OFF TOWARDS LORIENT IN THE SHIP'S LAUNCH. LEE SWEPT THE FRENCH HARBOUR THROUGH GLASSES...
I WOULDN'T BE IN MURRAY'S SHOES FOR A FORTUNE!


ALL COMMANDER MURRAY'S ELOQUENCE AND ENTREATIES COULD NOT PERSUADE THE SENIOR FRENCH NAVAL OFFICERS ABOARD THE MARECHAL RENIER TO DO WHAT HE ASKED.
BUT THINK AGAIN, GENTLEMEN - YOU COULD CARRY ON THE FIGHT FOR FRANCE YOUR SHIPS WOULD REMAIN YOURS THE BRITISH FLEET WAITS TO WELCOME YOU. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

BUT MURRAY COULD SEE THAT IT WAS USELESS PERHAPS IT WAS BECAUSE THE FRENCHMEN, OVERCOME BY A NATIONAL DISASTER, WERE GRIPPED BY APATHY AND DESPAIR.
YOU BRITISH MUST LEAVE US TO MANAGE OUR OWN AFFAIRS.
YOU WILL NOT FIRE ON US. IT IS BUT A BLUFF!
IT IS NO BLUFF, GENTLEMEN!

IF THE BRITISH SHIPS DO FIRE ON US, THEN FRENCH GUNS WILL ANSWER BACK...AND WAR WILL BE DECLARED BETWEEN FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN!

AN HOUR LATER, COMMANDER MURRAY WAS BACK IN THE DADELY. THE SITUATION WAS DESPERATE...
NOTHING I CAN SAY WILL SHAKE THEIR BELIEF THAT WE'RE BLUFFING
SURELY THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GERMANY WILL WIN THE WAR.

THE FATEFUL HOUR DREW NEAR WHEN ADMIRAL BANKS KNEW HE MUST ACT. YET HE STILL SHRANK FROM THE AWFUL THING HE HAD TO DO. HE SIGNALLED COMMANDER MURRAY TO MAKE A FINAL ATTEMPT AND THIS TIME, LEE RAYNOR BEGGED TO BE TAKEN IN THE LAUNCH.
I MUST SEE DURAND, MAYBE I CAN PERSUADE HIM TO COME OVER TO US!
ONCE MORE THE GADFLY'S LAUNCH SET COMMANDER MURRAY ABOARD THE FRENCH CRUISER, THEN IT MOVED OFF TOWARDS DURAND'S DESTROYER.
AYE, AYE, SIR!
SEND THE LAUNCH STRAIGHT BACK, RAYNOR I'LL PICK YOU UP LATER.

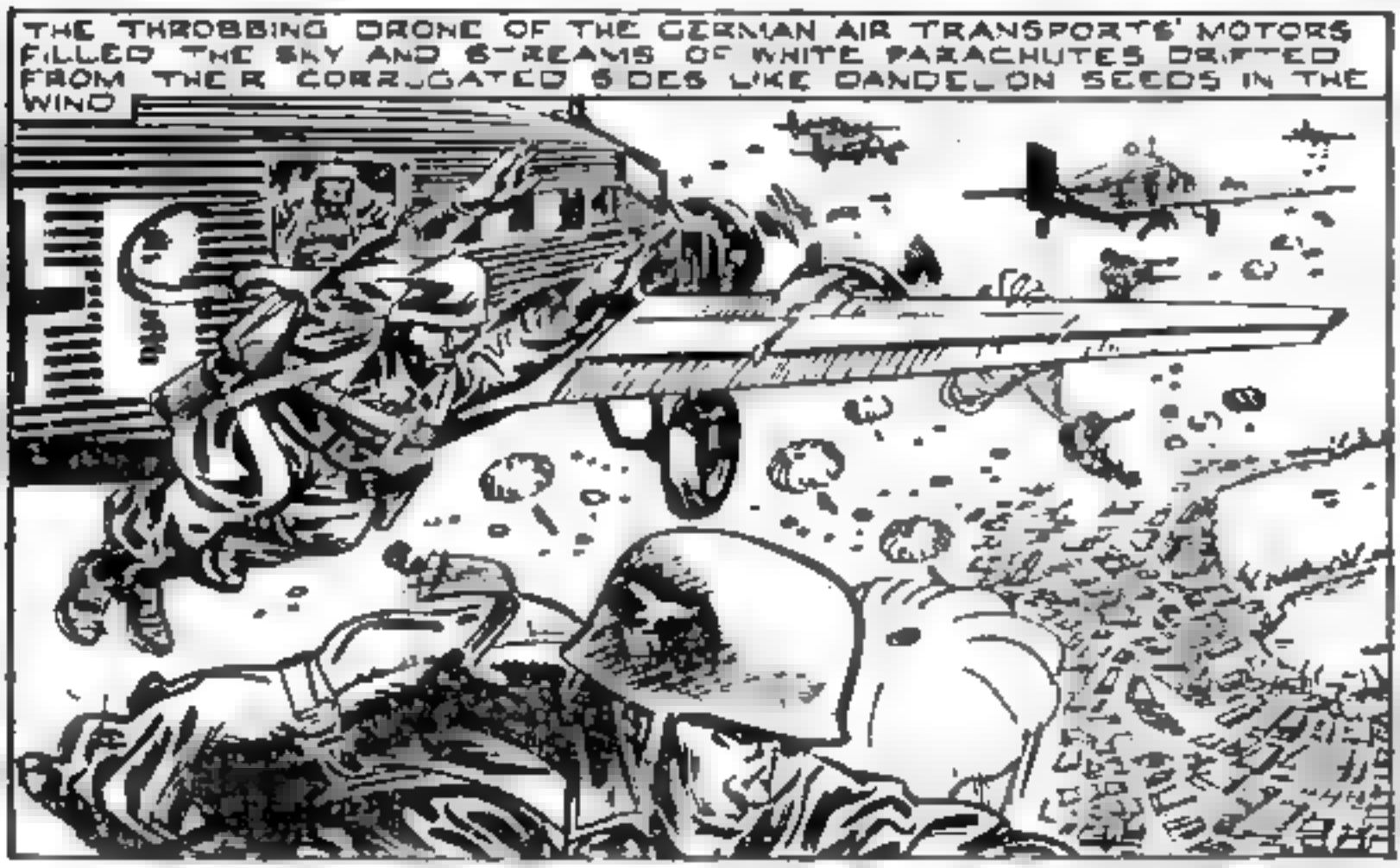
AS LEE CAME ALONGSIDE AND SWUNG ABOARD THE DESTROYER, EMILE DURAND GREETED HIM WITH HIS USUAL PERFECT MANNERS. BUT HIS SMILE WAS STRAINED . . .
YOU WISH TO SEE ME, MON AMI?
YES, DURAND, YOU GAVE ME AND MY MEN THEIR FREEDOM ~ EVEN THEIR LIVES, PERHAPS ~ WHEN WE WERE PRISONERS ABOARD YOUR SHIP. NOW, I BEG YOU, SAVE YOURSELF ~ COME TO ENGLAND WITH US.

LEE SPOKE EARNESTLY SUDDENLY IT HAD BECOME A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY THAT HE SHOULD SAVE THIS LIKEABLE FRENCHMAN.
DO YOU WISH TO BECOME A SLAVE BENEATH THE NAZI YOKE, TO HAVE THEM SNEER AT THE FRENCH NAVY AS UHLMANN DID WHEN HE BOARDED YOU? SURELY NOT, MY FRIEND. SLIP ANCHOR QUICKLY AND STEAM OUT OF THE HARBOUR.
AS HE ARGUED, THE BRITISHER TRIED TO READ THE SET EXPRESSION ON THAT PALE PROUD FACE. .

PLAINLY EMILE DURAND WAS INFLUENCED BY THE STUBBORN DEFIANCE OF HIS SENIOR OFFICERS BUT LEE'S APPEAL WAS NOT FALLING ON DEAF EARS, BETTER SENSE HAD THE FRENCHMAN WAVERING. . .
IF WE ARE NOT KILLED BY BRITISH GUNS, WE ROT UNDER THE HATED BOCHE, TIENS!

SUDDENLY DURAND'S MIND WAS MADE UP...
I WILL DO IT! WE ESCAPE TO FREEDOM!

DURAND SWUNG ROUND TOWARDS THE BRIDGE - AND A SUDDEN GASP ESCAPED HIM!
LOOK!
GERMAN PARATROOPS!
IT WAS THE EVIL VANGUARD OF HITLER'S MIGHTY WEHRMACHT. CRIES OF DISMAY WENT UP FROM THE FRENCH CREW


THE THROBBING DRONE OF THE GERMAN AIR TRANSPORTS' MOTORS FILLED THE SKY AND STREAMS OF WHITE PARACHUTES DRIFTED FROM THEIR CORRUGATED SIDES LIKE DANDELION SEEDS IN THE WIND

FOR THE FIRST TIME THE FULL DREAD MEANING OF GERMAN CONQUEST CAME HOME TO THE FRENCHMEN. EMILE DURAND GROANED . . .

PARBLEU, IT IS TOO LATE! I CANNOT RAISE STEAM IN TIME!

TRY, DURAND! YOU MUST TRY!

ONCE MORE LEE'S VEHEMENT PERSUASION TURNED THE TIDE AND SECONDS LATER, THE SHIP RANG WITH DURAND'S COMMANDS.

THEN AN URGENT HAIL BROUGHT LEE TO THE DESTROYER'S RAILS. IT CAME FROM COMMANDER MURRAY, . .

QUICK, RAYNOR! WE MUST GET AWAY!

JUST A SECOND, SIR.

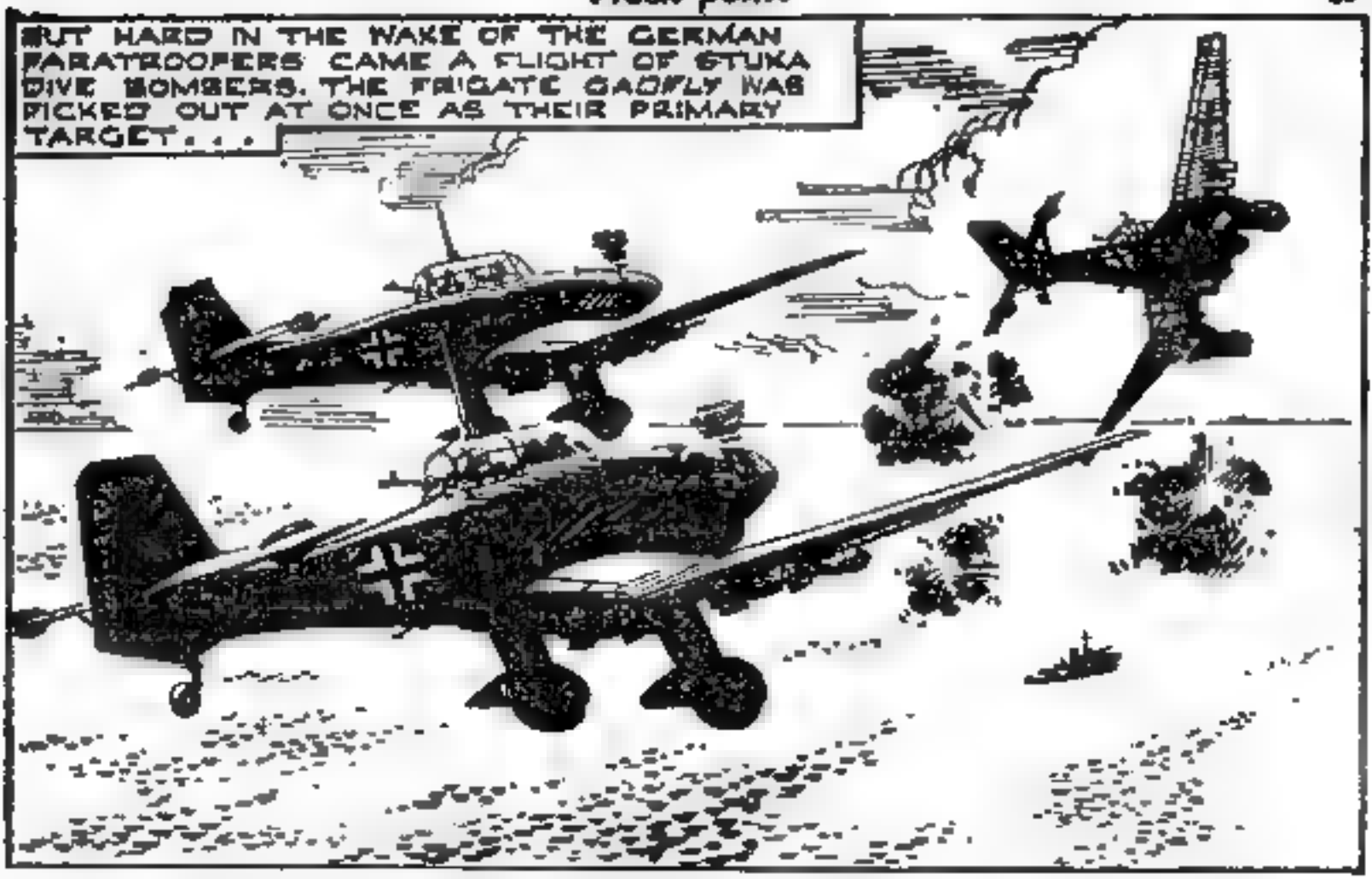
NO, NO! COME NOW!

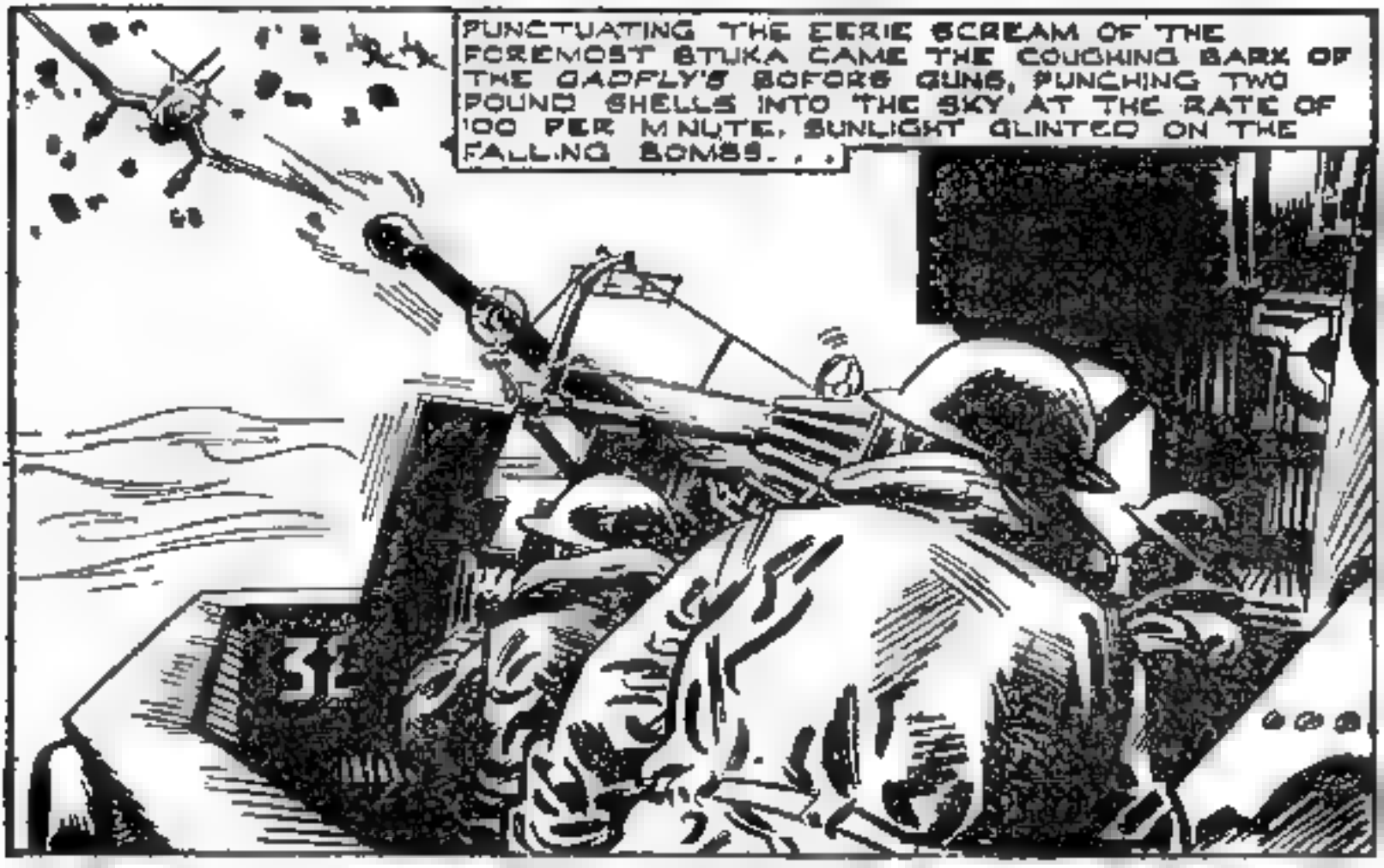
IMPATIENT AND WORRIED, MURRAY WOULD BROOK NO DELAY.

RELUCTANTLY, LEE JOINED THE HEAVY-HEARTED MURRAY IN THE LAUNCH, THE COMMANDER'S HOPES OF WINNING OVER THE FRENCH HAD BEEN SHATTERED BY THE DRAMATIC ARRIVAL OF THE GERMAN SKY TROOPS.

I'VE PERSUADED DURAND TO MAKE A BREAK FOR IT, SIR.

HE'LL HAVE TO BE MIGHTY SLIPPY, THEN!


BUT HARD IN THE WAKE OF THE GERMAN PARATROOPERS CAME A FLIGHT OF STUKA DIVE BOMBERS. THE FRIGATE GADFLY WAS PICKED OUT AT ONCE AS THEIR PRIMARY TARGET. . .


PUNCTUATING THE EERIE SCREAM OF THE FOREMOST STUKA CAME THE COUGHING BARK OF THE GADFLY'S BOFORS GUNS, PUNCHING TWO POUND SHELLS INTO THE SKY AT THE RATE OF 100 PER MINUTE. SUNLIGHT GLINTED ON THE FALLING BOMBS. . .

THE BOMBS MISSED AND THE STUKA TWISTED AWAY UNSCATHED. SECONDS LATER, IT WHEELED ABOVE THE DEFENCELESS LAUNCH, AND ITS GUNNER CUT LOOSE...
HARD OVER!

A VICIOUS HAIL OF SHOT SWEPT ACROSS THE LAUNCH, PUNCHING GREAT HOLES IN THE THIN HULL AND CUTTING DOWN COMMANDER MURRAY WHERE HE CROUCHED IN THE COCKPIT.
AAAH!

THE FRAIL CRAFT WAS ALMOST SEVERED IN TWO AND BEGAN TO FOUNDER AT ONCE.
MISTER MURRAY! SIR!
HOLD UP, NOBBY.
BUT A PAIR OF SIGHTLESS EYES TOLD THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT THAT COMMANDER MURRAY, WHO HAD STRIVEN SO HARD FOR PEACE BETWEEN OLD 'ALLIES, HAD BEEN KILLED OUTRIGHT.'

IN A MOMENT, LEE FOUND HIMSELF TREADING WATER CLOSE BESIDE THE OTHER TWO SURVIVORS. BUT HELP WAS ON THE WAY. . .
YOU OKAY, JENKINS?
I'M ALL RIGHT, SIR. BUT NOBBY 'ERE AIN'T SO GOOD.

IT WAS EMILE DURAND'S OWN LAUNCH WHICH NOSED CLOSE TO THEM, ITS ENGINE IDLING. THE FRENCHMAN AND HIS CREW BENT SOLICITOUSLY TO HAUL THEM FROM THE WATER. . .
THE COWARDLY BOCHE MUST VENT HIS SPITE ON A LITTLE BOAT THAT CANNOT HIT BACK AT HIM. ONE DAY HE SHALL PAY FOR HIS BRUTALITY.
THANKS, OLD CHAP, FOR COMING TO PICK US UP.

A SEARCH FOR THE LUCKLESS COMMANDER MURRAY PROVED FRUITLESS. THE BRITISHER TURNED A HAGGARD FACE TO THE GRIM-LOOKING DURAND.
IT'S NO GOOD, DURAND, WE'D BETTER NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME!
VRAIMENT, LET US RETURN. I HAVE ENOUGH STEAM UP

ONE OF THE BRITISH RATINGS GAVE A STARTLED EXCLAMATION...
COR...LOOK AT THE OLD GADFLY!
SHE IS LEAVING YOU, MESSIEURS!
THOSE MURDERING STUKAS ARE MAKING IT TOO HOT FOR HER!

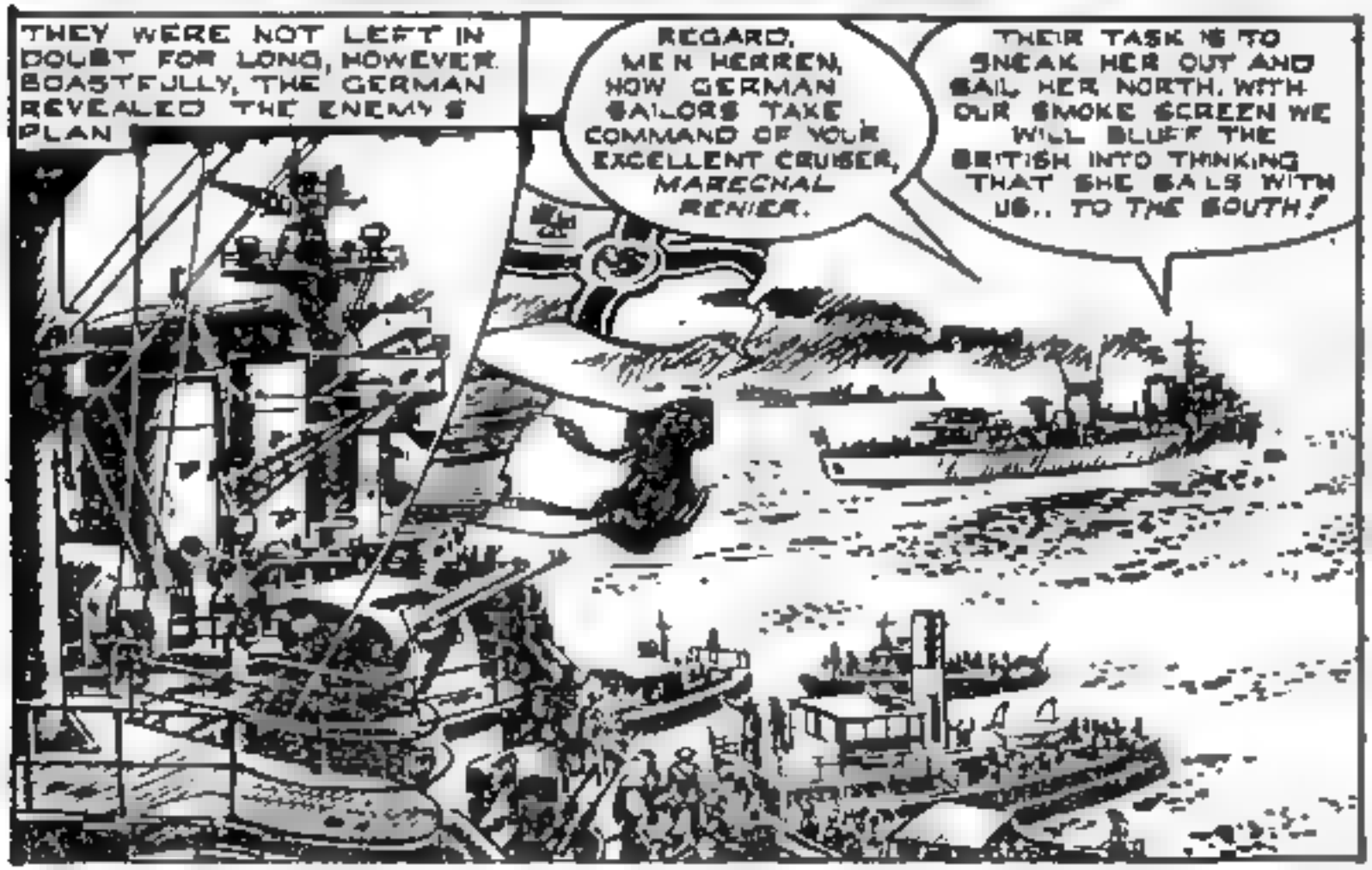
LEE HURRIEDLY STRUGGLED INTO A CHANGE OF CLOTHES AS SOON AS THEY BOARDED THE FRENCH DESTROYER...
QUICK, DURAND, YOU GET YOUR SHIP MOVING! I'LL BE ON DECK IN A SECOND.
OUI, OUI!
AS HE MADE FOR THE DECK, LEE COULD HEAR THE URGENT RASP OF THE HOISTING ANCHOR.

BUT SUDDENLY THE BUSTLE OF ACTIVITY ABOVE DECKS CEASED. RUSHING TO THE SHIP'S RAILS, LEE SOON UNDERSTOOD WHY...
JERRIES!
BEHOLD YOUR CONQUERORS, FRENCHMEN! WE COME ABOARD!

UNHAPPILY I HAVE NO TIME FOR PLEASANTRIES MEIN HERREN, MY INSTRUCTIONS ARE SIMPLE AND IMMEDIATE!

BRUSQUELY INTRODUCING HIMSELF AS LEUTNANT GRUBER OF THE GERMAN NAVY, THE NEWCOMER GAVE HIS ARROGANT ORDERS
YOU ALREADY HAVE STEAM UP. THAT IS GOOT. AT ONCE WE WILL MOVE OFF AND SAIL SOUTH... KEEPING CLOSE TO THE COAST. THEN WE MAKE SMOKE SCREEN, JA?
SMOKE SCREEN?

GRUBER DID NOT DEIGN TO ANSWER THE FRENCHMAN'S QUERY AND DURAND LOOKED QUESTIONINGLY AT LEE WHO WAS STANDING CLOSE BY. . .
FIRST WE MUST HOODWINK THE ACCURSED BRITISH NAVY OUT THERE. STAND BY FOR SMOKE SCREEN, HERR DURAND.


THEY WERE NOT LEFT IN DOUBT FOR LONG, HOWEVER. BOASTFULLY, THE GERMAN REVEALED THE ENEMY'S PLAN
REGARD, MEN HERREN, HOW GERMAN SAILORS TAKE COMMAND OF YOUR EXCELLENT CRUISER, MARECHAL RENIER.
THEIR TASK IS TO SNEAK HER OUT AND SAIL HER NORTH. WITH OUR SMOKE SCREEN WE WILL BLUFF THE BRITISH INTO THINKING THAT SHE SAILS WITH US.. TO THE SOUTH!

THE FRENCH DESTROYER WAS BARELY CLEAR OF LORIENT WHEN A THUNDEROUS SALVO BURST FROM GERMAN-OPERATED SHORE BATTERIES. THEIR TARGET WAS THE BRITISH FLOTILLA LYING OFF THE COAST
DO WE REPLY TO THIS CONFOUNDED SHELLING AND RISK HITTING THE FRENCH FLEET...OR STEAM OUT OF RANGE AND LOSE CONTACT?
I SEE A DESTROYER GOING SOUTH, SIR...MAKING SMOKE.
BY GEORGE, ARE THE BLIGHTERS BREAKING OUT!

ADMIRAL BANKS VAINLY TRIED TO PIERCE THE BLACK SMUDGE OF SMOKE. BUT A DECISION HAD TO BE MADE...
WELL SHADOW THAT SMOKE SCREEN. IF OUR SUSPICIONS ARE CORRECT WE'LL STOP THEIR LITTLE NONSENSE WITH A WARNING SHOT OR TWO!
VERY GOOD, SIR!

# Chapter 4 SMOKE TRAIL

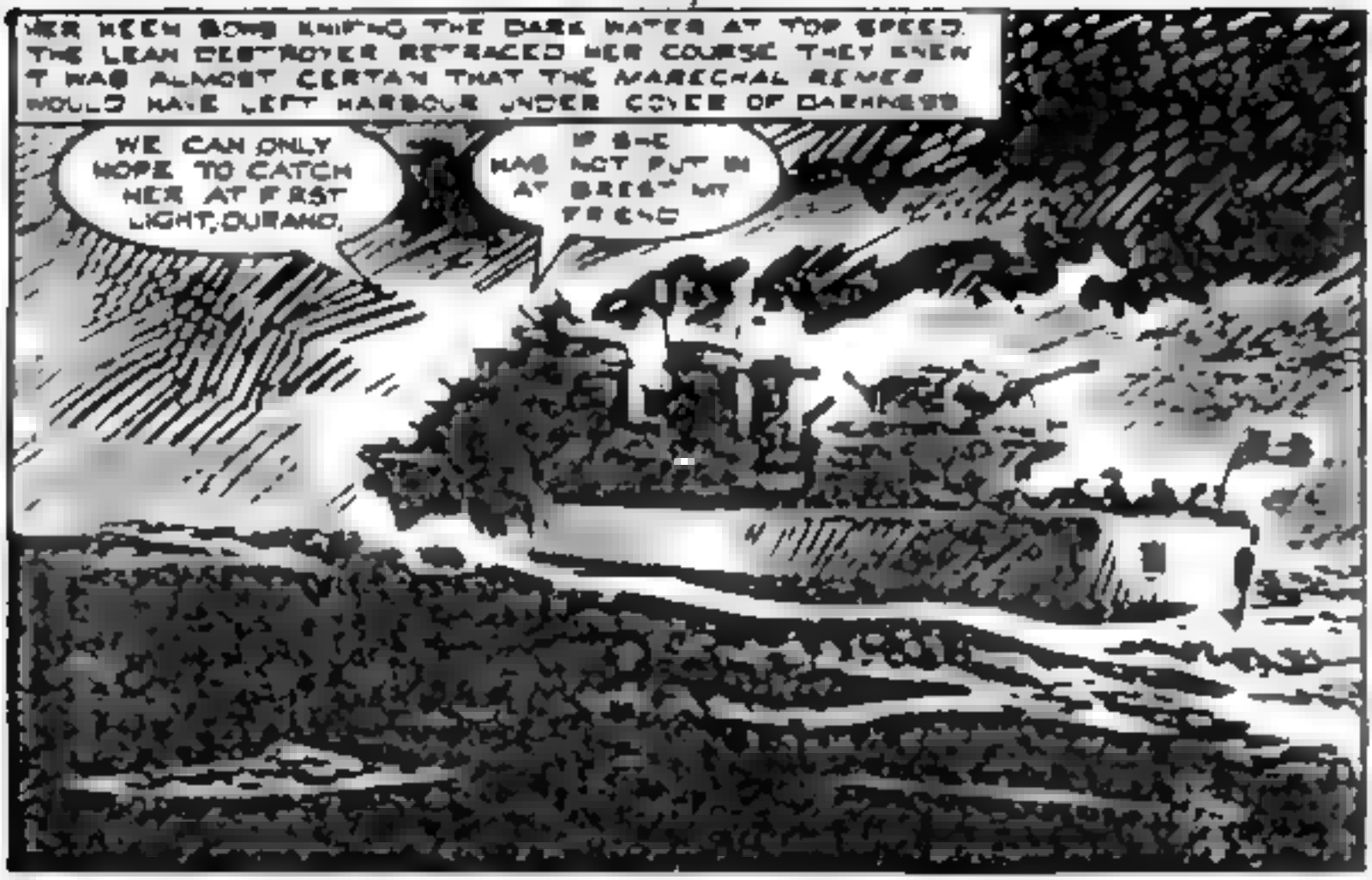
FOR A TIME AN UNNATURAL QUIET SETTLED ON THE SHIP ~ UNTIL A SINGLE HOARSE NOTE RENT THE AIR...
INSTANTLY, SILENT HANDS REACHED OUT FROM NOWHERE
STARTLED GRUNTS WERE CUT SHORT...
AND BODIES MYSTERIOUSLY TOOK TO THE AIR...
SMARTING UNDER THE HEAPED INSULTS OF THE PAST HOUR, THE FRENCHMEN DEALT SWIFTLY AND ROUGHLY WITH THE GERMAN PRIZE-CREW

THE LAST BLOW OF THE REVOLT WENT CRISPLY TO LEUTENANT GRUBER'S CHIN, DURAND SPRANG TO THE VOICE PIPE...
THE SHIPS YOURS DURAND LOSE SPEED WE'LL TURN ABOUT!
FULL ASTERN, BOTH!

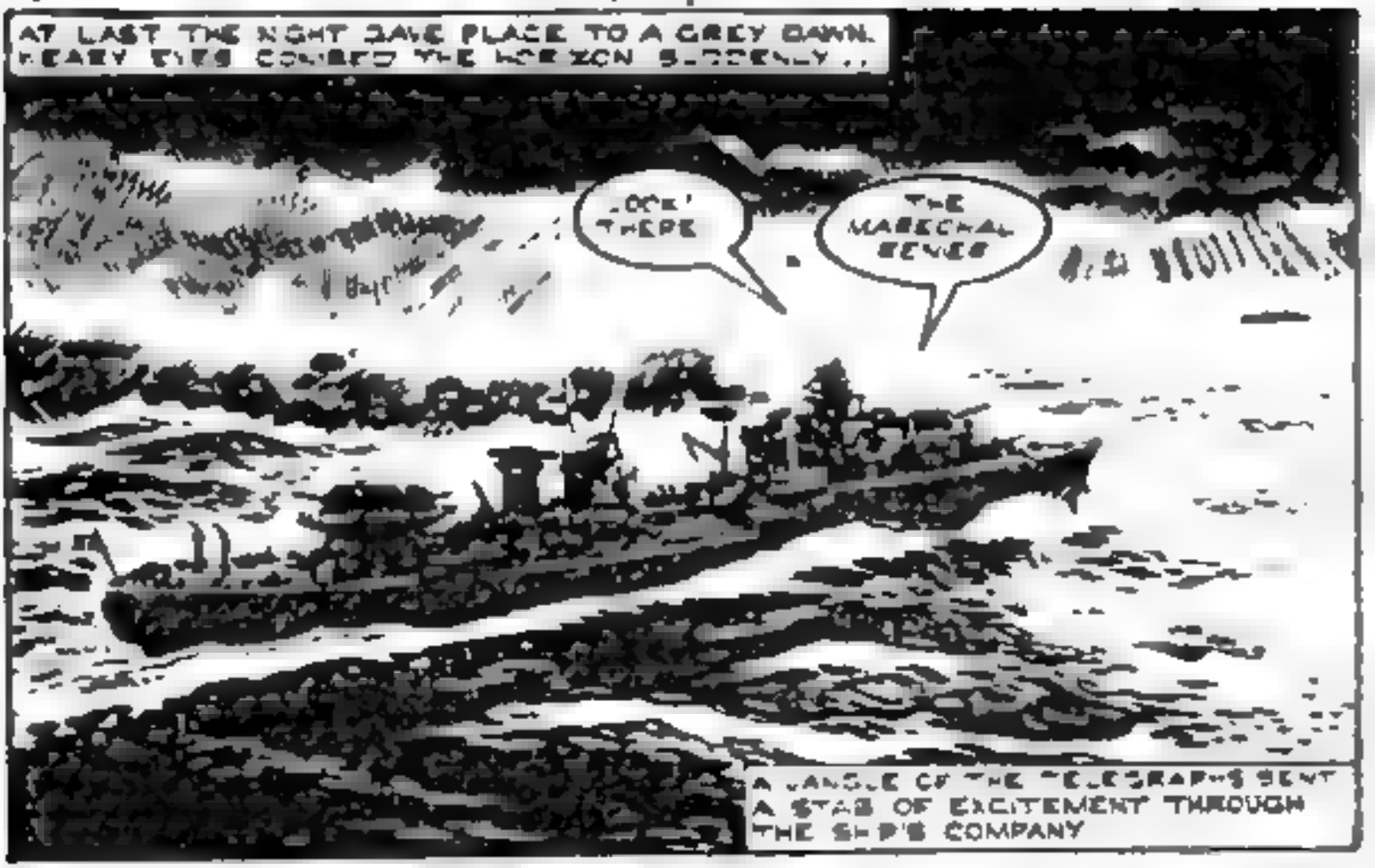
THE NEXT SECOND LEE CAUGHT THE FLASH OF GUNFIRE AT SEA AND BEFORE HE COULD UTTER A WARNING, THE SHELL LANDED
DUCK!
MA FOI!

THE WARNING SHOT FROM THE BRITISH NAVAL FORCE HAD BROUGHT DOWN THE MAST AND DESTROYED THEIR WIRELESS AERIAL..
THERE GOES OUR MEANS OF WARNING ADMIRAL BANKS TO TURN BACK.
AND SOON IT WILL BE TOO DARK TO FIND THE BRITISH SHIPS.
AND WE CAREN'T LOSE TIME!

FOR THE FIRST TIME LEE SAW THE LIGHT OF BATTLE IN DURAND'S EYES. THE FRENCHMAN'S JAW SET DETERMINEDLY ..
ONLY WE KNOW THE TRUE MOVEMENTS OF THE MARECHAL RENIER ONLY WE CAN SAVE HER!
..AND SAVE HER WE SHALL! FULL STEAM BACK TO LORIENT, DURAND


HER KEEN BOWS KNIFING THE DARK WATER AT TOP SPEED, THE LEAN DESTROYER RETRACED HER COURSE. THEY KNEW IT WAS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THE MARECHAL RENEO WOULD HAVE LEFT HARBOUR UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS.
WE CAN ONLY HOPE TO CATCH HER AT FIRST LIGHT, DURAND.
IF SHE HAS NOT PUT IN AT BREST MY FRIEND

ALL THROUGH THAT MURKY NIGHT THE PUNISHING PACE WAS CRUELLY MAINTAINED. EACH SLEEPLESS MAN ABOARD FOUND HIMSELF REVED TO EVERY VIBRANT QUIVER OF THAT LIVING SHIP. EYES STRAINED FOR THE FIRST STREAKS OF LIGHT.
WHY NOT A QUICK SHUT EYE, DURAND? YOU NEED IT.
I NEED PATIENCE, MY FRIEND. THAT IS ALL.
THE CURRENT WAS PASSED AND LEFT ASTERN. SOON THEY WERE PUNCHING THE HOSTILE WATERS OFF THE BREST PENINSULAR.

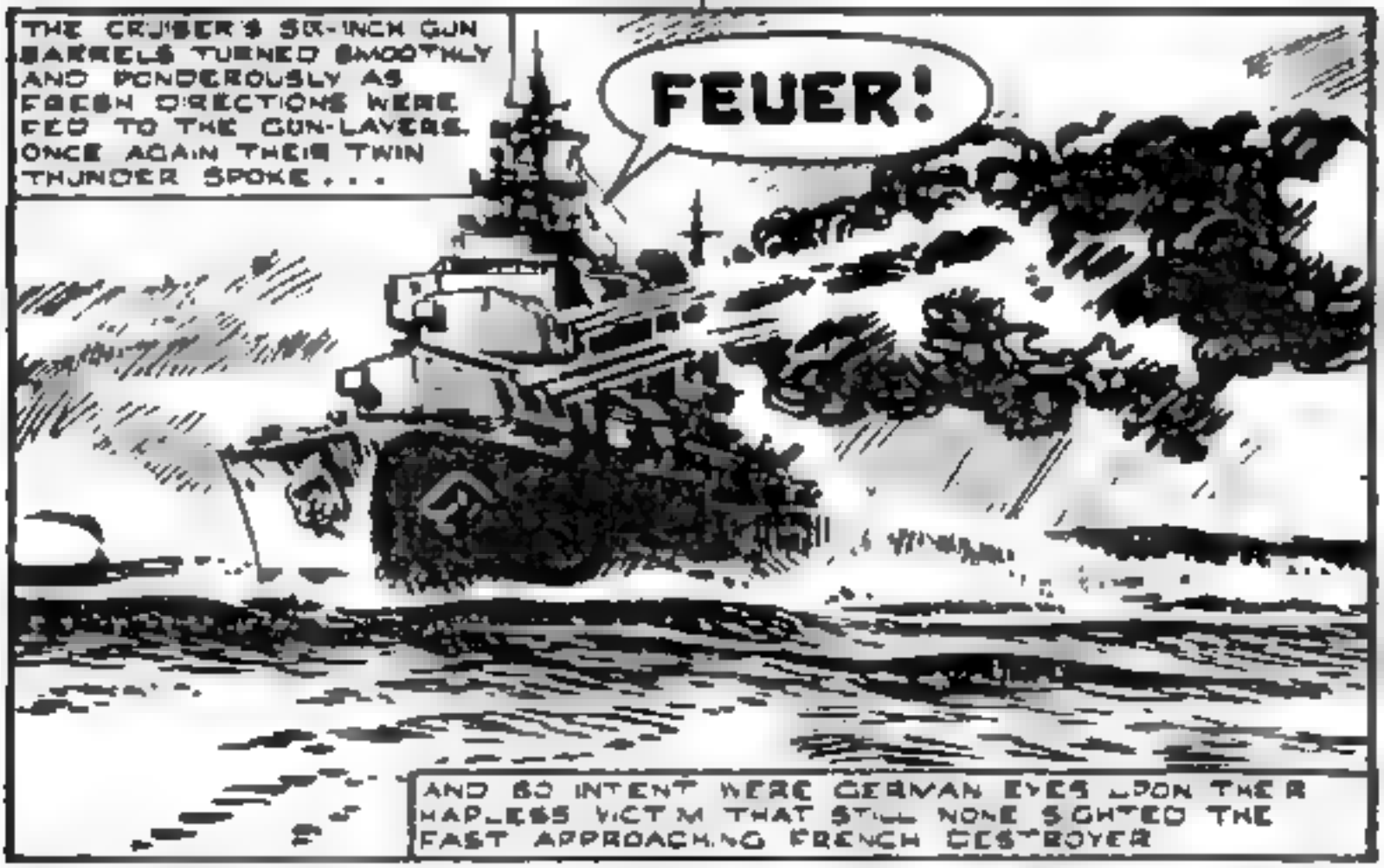

AT LAST THE NIGHT GAVE PLACE TO A GREY DAWN. WEARY EYES COMBED THE HORIZON SUDDENLY..
LOOK! THERE
THE MARECHAL SEVER
A RANGE OF THE TELEGRAPH SENT A STAB OF EXCITEMENT THROUGH THE SHIP'S COMPANY

TWO MILES AWAY THE MARECHAL SEVER MANNED ENTIRELY BY A NAZI CREW, SUDDENLY PICKED UP SPEED AND ALTERED COURSE FOR THE OPEN SEA A COLD SMILE CREASED THE HARD FEATURES OF HER NEW COMMANDER KAPITAN JULES KAUFMANN, FOR HE HAD HEARD GOOD NEWS FROM A RECONNAISSANCE SEAPLANE..
A BRITISH TROOPSHIP, EH? APPROACHING THE CHANNEL WHAT A BREAKFAST DISH FOR OUR GUNNERS, HEINRICH!
DELECTABLE, MEIN KAPITAN KAUFMANN!

UNAWARE OF THE DESTROYER THAT WAS RAPIDLY NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN THEM, THE GERMAN GUNNERS GRINNED IN GREEDY ANTICIPATION
A TROOPSHIP!
A CHANCE TO GET THE HANG OF THESE FRENCH GUNS, HA!
A GUN SPEAKS THE SAME LANGUAGE, WHOEVER MADE IT MEN FREUND

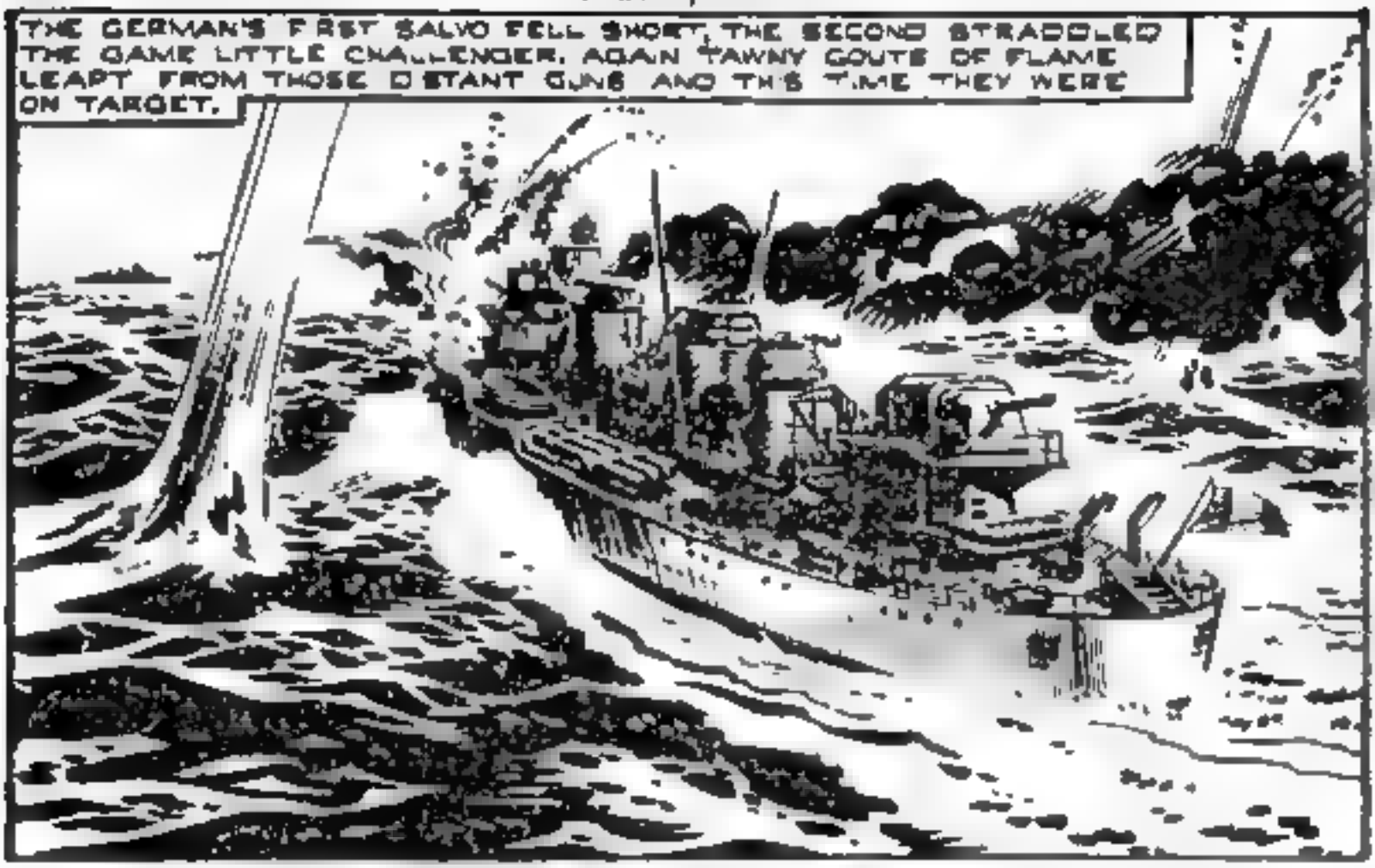
LEE HAD BEEN SEARCHING TENSELY FOR THE REASON FOR THE CRUISERS UNEXPECTED MANOEUVRE .. AND SOON FOUND IT
GREAT HEAVENS! A TROOPSHIP.. STEAMING ON HER OWN!

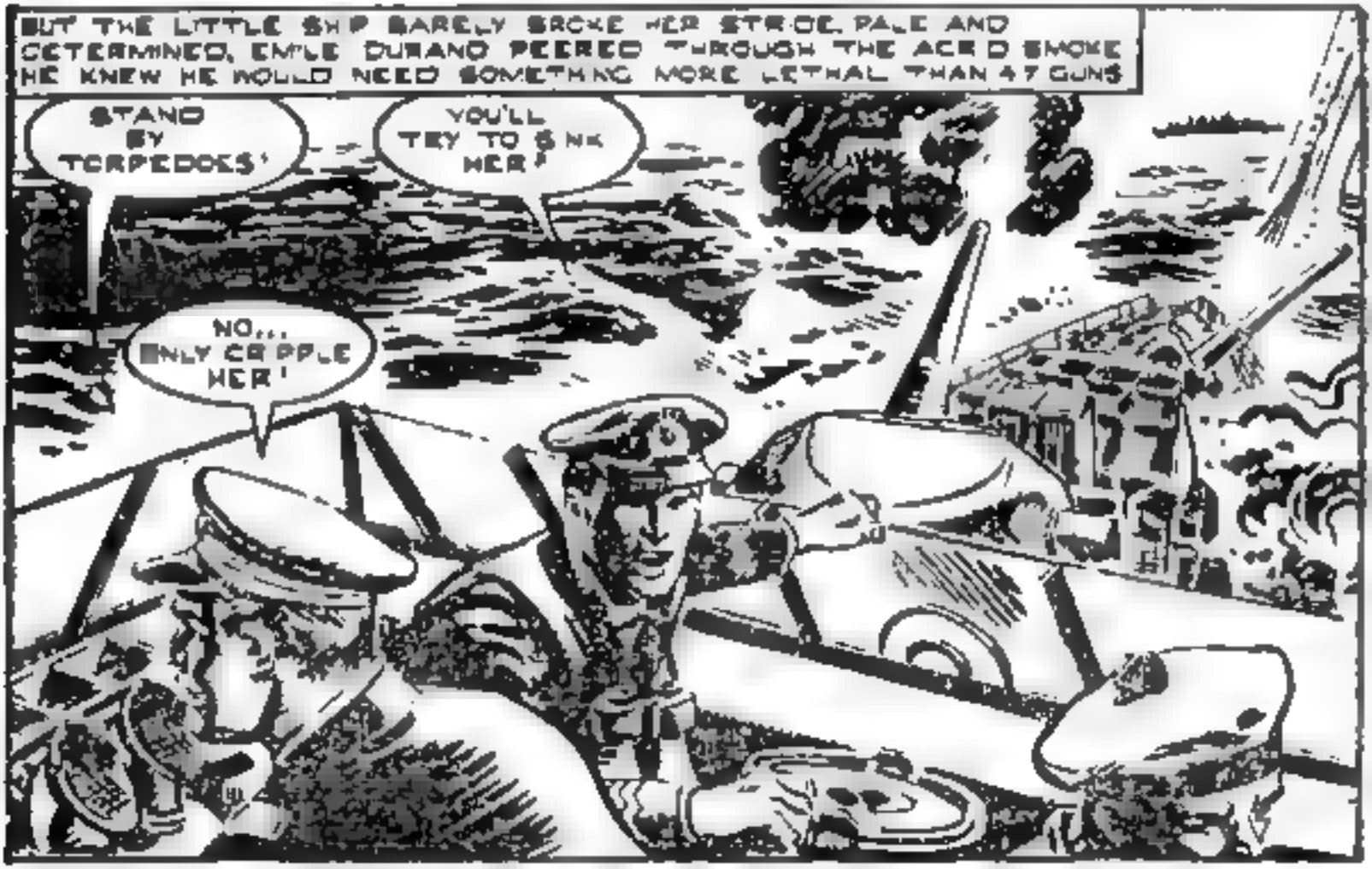
EVEN AS DURAND ROARED FOR THEIR LAST OUNCE OF SPEED, A DULL BOOMING ACROSS THE WATER TOLD THEM THAT THE DREAD DRAMA HAD BEGUN...
THE CRUISER'S OPENED FIRE
THAT TROOPSHIP LOOKS FAST BUT SHE HASN'T A CHANCE


THE CRUISER'S SIX-INCH GUN BARRELS TURNED SMOOTHLY AND PONDEROUSLY AS FRESH DIRECTIONS WERE FED TO THE GUN-LAYERS. ONCE AGAIN THEIR TWIN THUNDER SPOKE . . .
FEUER!
AND SO INTENT WERE GERMAN EYES UPON THEIR HAPLESS VICTIM THAT STILL NONE SIGHTED THE FAST APPROACHING FRENCH DESTROYER

FOR THE COLD-EYED NAZIS, THE FIRST INKLING THAT ANOTHER VESSEL HAD ENTERED THE ONE-SIDED BATTLE WAS A DIRECT HIT ON THEIR FORWARD DIRECTORS

KAPITAN KAUFMANN'S REPLY WAS INSTANT...
SINK THAT DESTROYER!

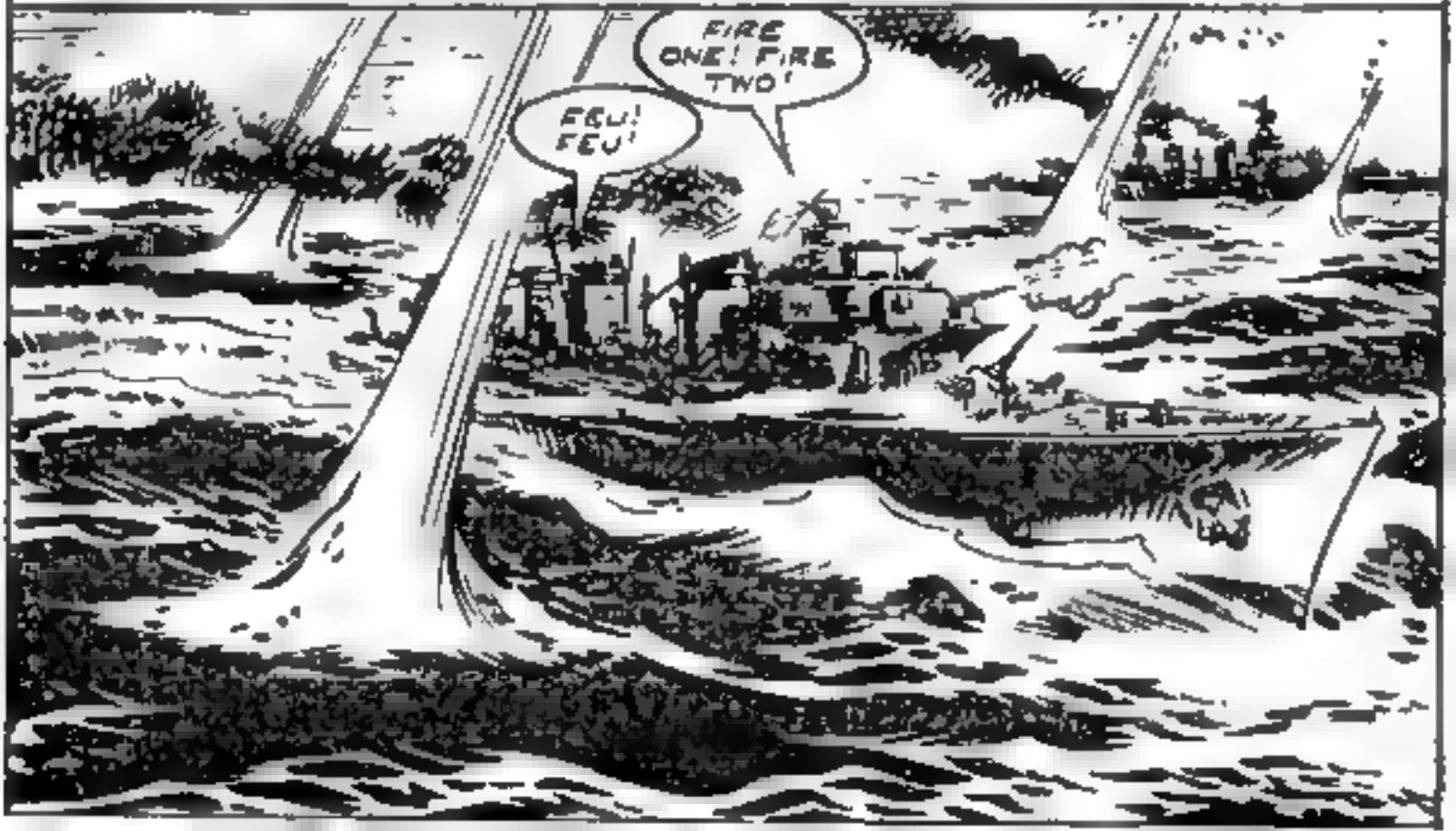

THE GERMAN'S FIRST SALVO FELL SHORT, THE SECOND STRADDLED THE GAME LITTLE CHALLENGER. AGAIN TAWNY GOUTS OF FLAME LEAPT FROM THOSE DISTANT GUNS AND THIS TIME THEY WERE ON TARGET.

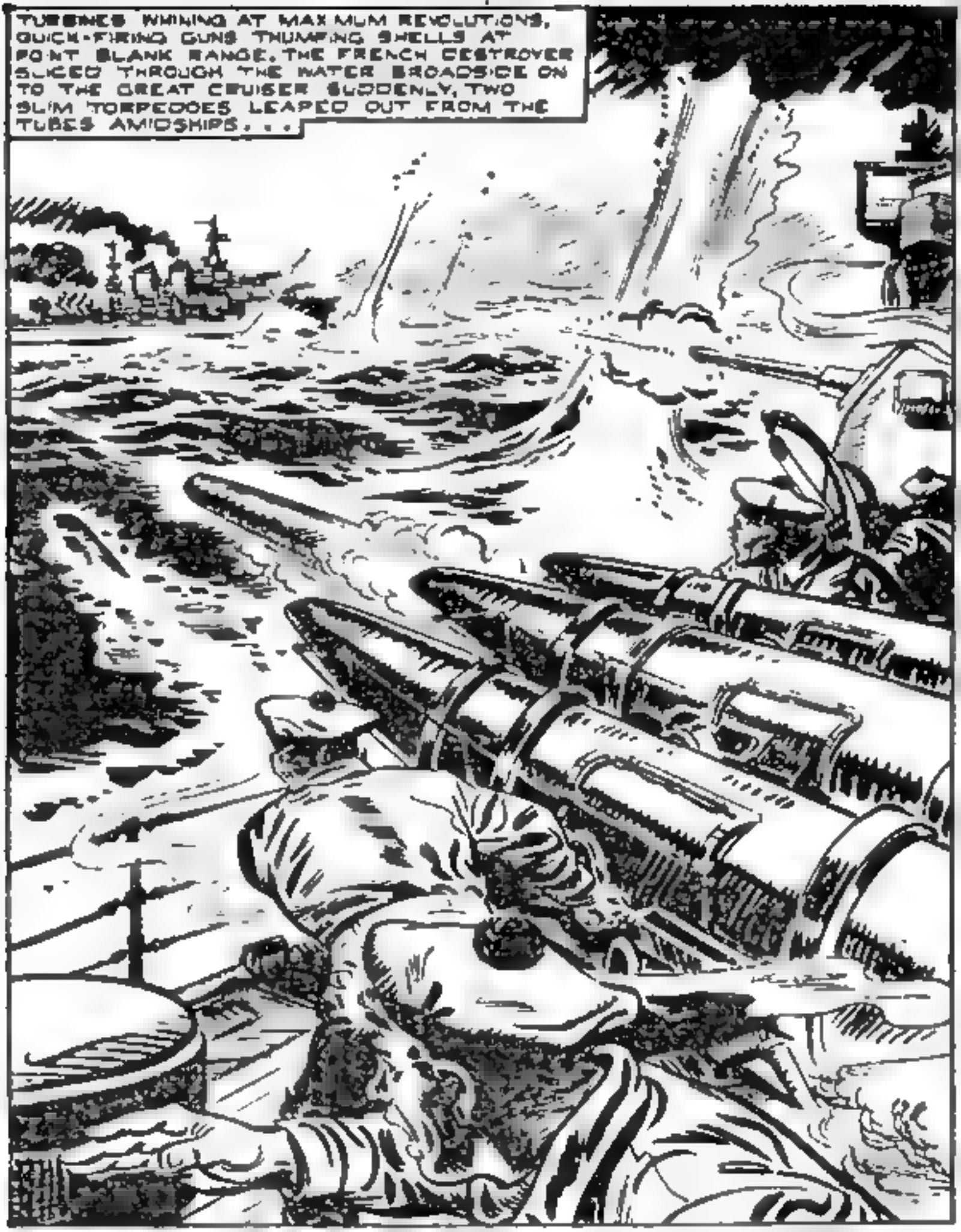

BUT THE LITTLE SHIP BARELY BROKE HER STRIDE. PALE AND DETERMINED, EMILE DURAND PEERED THROUGH THE ACRID SMOKE HE KNEW HE WOULD NEED SOMETHING MORE LETHAL THAN 47 GUNS
STAND BY TORPEDOES!
YOU'LL TRY TO SINK HER?
NO... ONLY CRIPPLE HER!

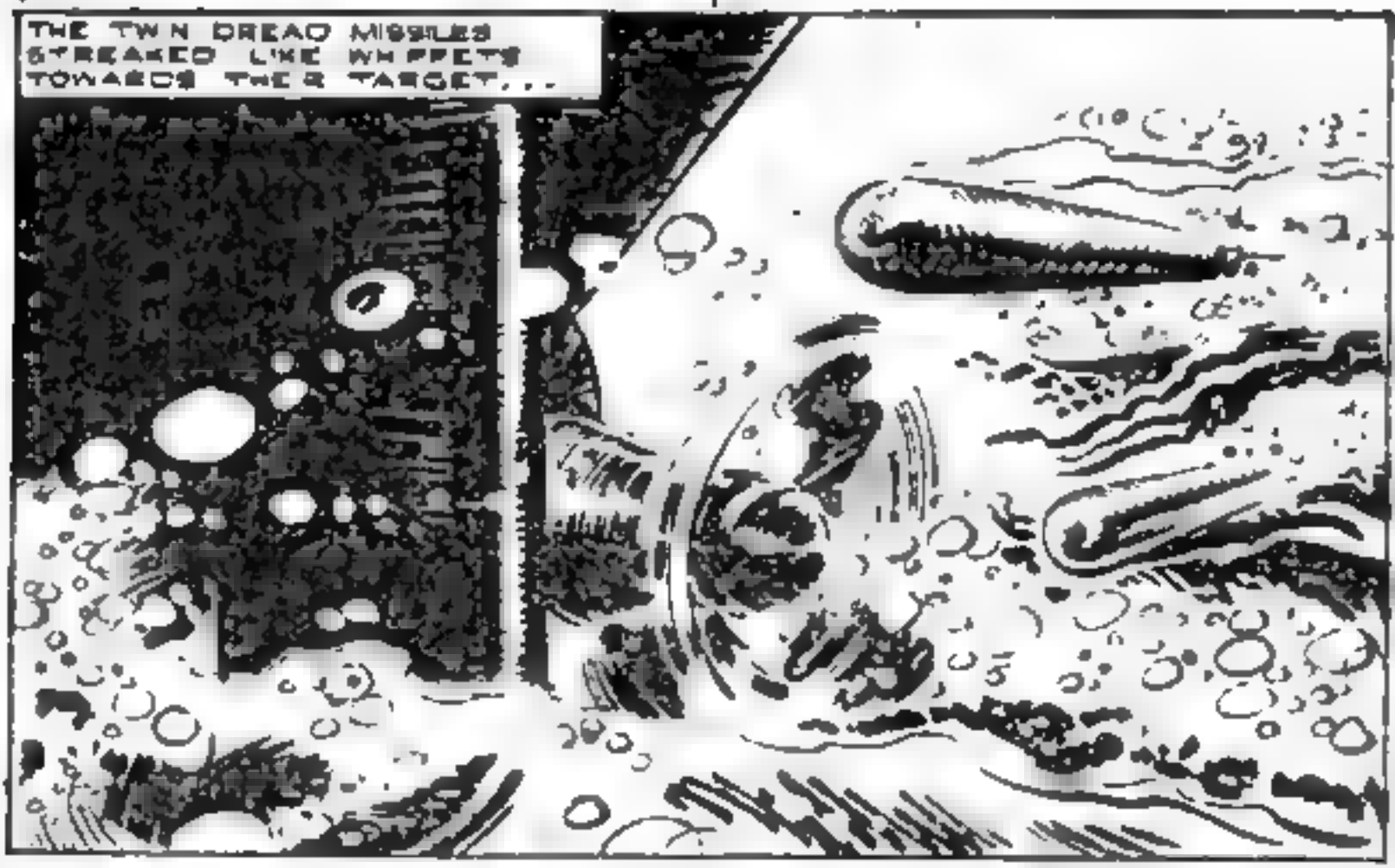
DESPITE THE DIN OF BATTLE LEE FOUND TIME TO SNATCH A SECOND GLANCE AT THE FRENCHMAN; HE KNEW HE WAS SEEING THE REAL EMILE DURAND IN ACTION... COOL, INFLEXIBLE, UNDAUNTED
AIM FOR HER STEERING? THAT'LL MEAN GOING IN REAL CLOSE!
THAT IS TRUE!

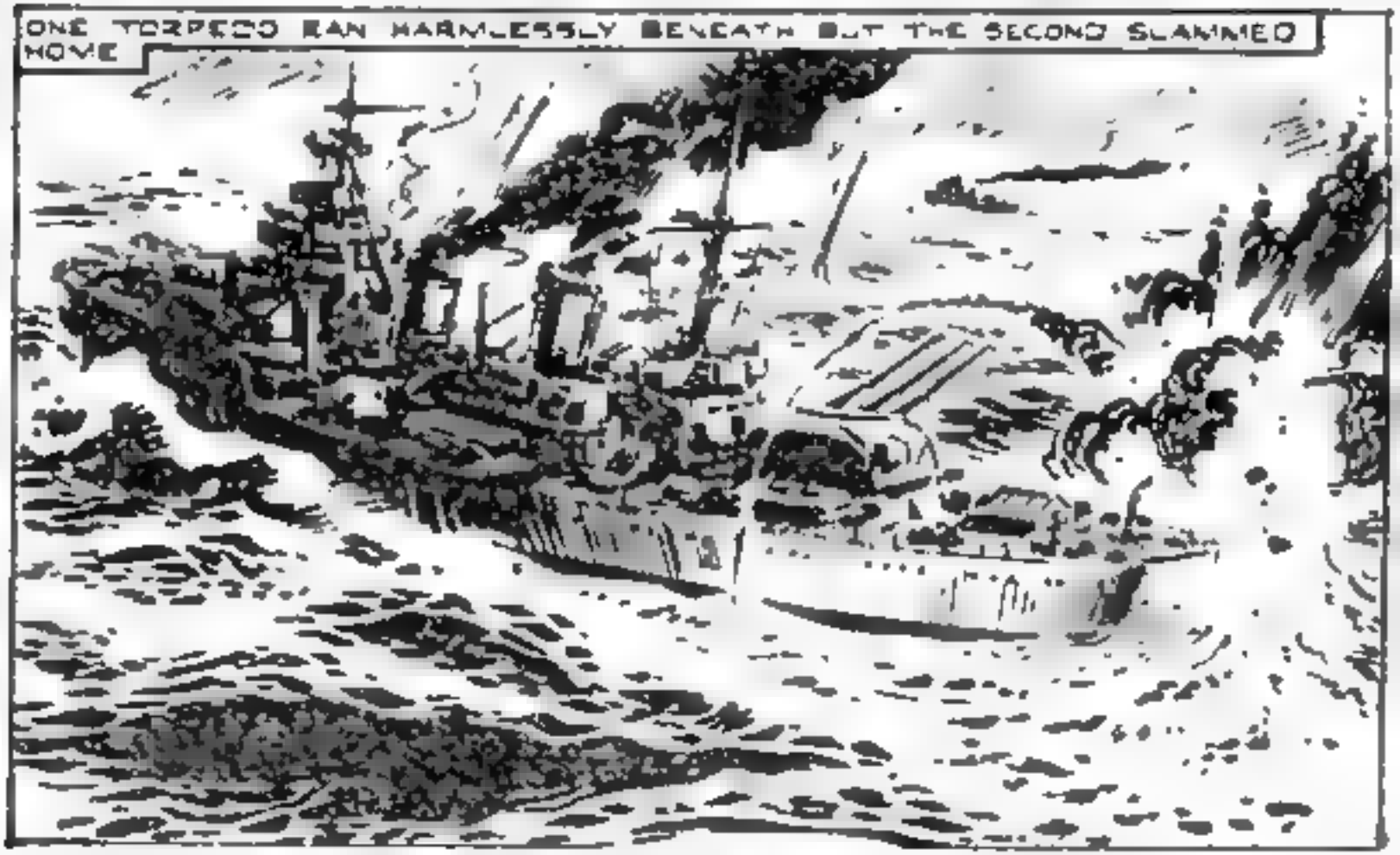
NEXT SECOND, THE BRITISHER WAS PLUNGED INTO A ROARING BLACKNESS. THE WORLD SPUN AND WHEN HIS SENSES SLOWLY RIGHTED...
DURAND! DURAND! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
THE FRENCHMAN'S EYES FLICKERED OPEN FOR A MOMENT. EMILE DURAND WAS ALIVE - BUT HE WAS OUT OF THE FIGHT

LEE TOOK COMMAND. WITH SMARTING EYES HE MEASURED THE NARROWING GAP, COUNTING DOWN THE YARDS.
'IF A FRENCHMAN CAN GO IN AS CRAZILY CLOSE AS THIS, SO CAN THE BRITISH NAVY!


COOLLY CHOOSING THE PRECISE MOMENT, LEE SWUNG THE SHIP BROADSIDE. THIS CRUELLY EXPOSED THEIR FLANK BUT IT SWUNG INTO ACTION THEIR TRUMP CARD- A BATTERY OF TORPEDOES LEE'S HOARSE COMMAND RAPPED OUT...
FIRE ONE! FIRE TWO!
FEU! FEU!


TURBINES WHINING AT MAXIMUM REVOLUTIONS, QUICK-FIRING GUNS THUMPING SHELLS AT POINT BLANK RANGE. THE FRENCH DESTROYER SLICED THROUGH THE WATER BROADSIDE ON TO THE GREAT CRUISER SUDDENLY, TWO SLIM TORPEDOES LEAPED OUT FROM THE TUBES AMIDSHIPS. . .


THE TWIN DREAD MISSILES STREAKED LIKE WHIPETS TOWARDS THEIR TARGET...


ONE TORPEDO RAN HARMLESSLY BENEATH BUT THE SECOND SLAMMED HOME

ROBBED OF ITS STEERING, THE CRUISER ROLLED AND LURCHED IN THE HEAVY SWELL. WITH STERN FACE KAPTAN JULES KAUFMANN WAITED FOR A REPORT OF THE DAMAGE IT WAS EVEN WORSE THAN HE FEARED...

SPEAK, MAN! IS THERE NO MEANS OF STEERING WHATSOEVER?

NONE, MEIN KAPITAN, WE ARE HELPLESS.

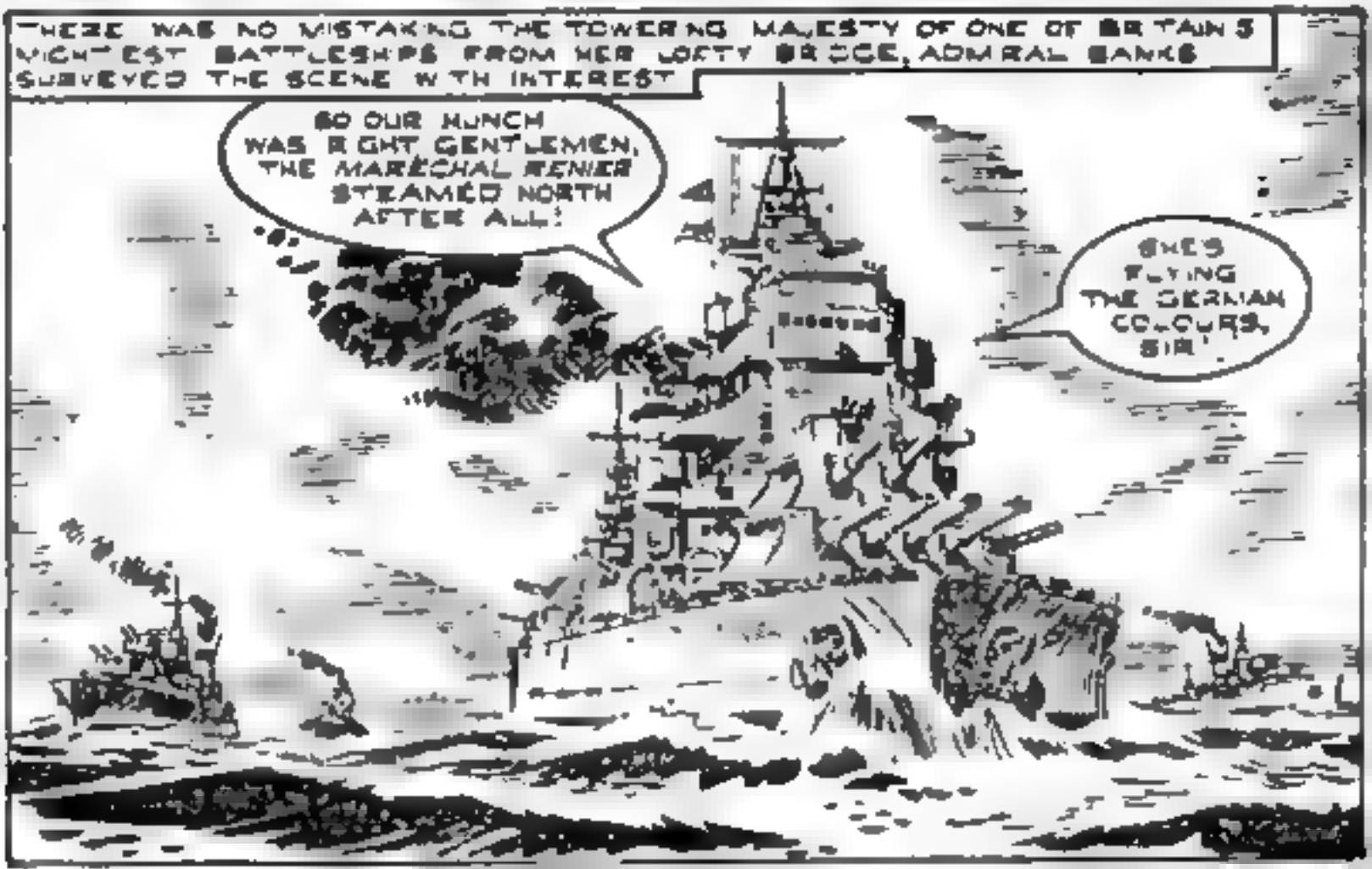
KAPTAN KAUFMANN CURSED THE AUTHOR OF THEIR SUDDEN PLIGHT. HE STILL HAD GUNS.

THE GERMAN CAPTAIN SWUNG ROUND TO BARK A VICIOUS COMMAND BUT IT DIED IN HIS THROAT. TWO THUNDEROUS CRACKS STRUCK HIS EARS AND TWO HUGE COLUMNS OF WATER CLIMBED OUT OF THE SEA NEARBY

WAS IST!

ACHTUNG! IT IS THE BRITISH FLEET.

IN THE BATTERED DESTROYER, THE SIGHT OF BRITISH NAVAL MIGHT HAD A VERY DIFFERENT EFFECT. EVEN THE WOUNDED DURAND STRUGGLED UP TO SHARE THE GENERAL JUBILATION.
IT'S THE FLAGSHIP! ADMIRAL BANKS' FORCE!
MAGNIFIQUE!


THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THE TOWERING MAJESTY OF ONE OF BRITAIN'S MIGHTIEST BATTLESHIPS. FROM HER LOFTY BRIDGE, ADMIRAL BANKS SURVEYED THE SCENE WITH INTEREST.
SO OUR HUNCH WAS RIGHT GENTLEMEN, THE MARÉCHAL FERNIER STEAMED NORTH AFTER ALL!
SHE'S FLYING THE GERMAN COLOURS, SIR!

THE ADMIRAL CLAPPED GLASSES TO HIS EYES...
SHE'S IN TROUBLE, TOO. MAYBE THAT FRENCH DESTROYER CAN TELL US WHAT HAPPENED. ASK HER CAPTAIN ABOARD, LAMBERT.
VERY GOOD, SIR!

SO LEE AND DURAND PRESENTLY FOUND THEMSELVES ABOARD THE IMMENSE BATTLESHIP. AS THEY WATCHED THE SURRENDER OF THE GERMAN COMMANDER, ADMIRAL BANKS LISTENED TO LEE RAYNOR'S STORY WITH MOUNTING APPRECIATION.
FINE WORK, YOU TWO. YOUR HAMSTRINGING OF THE *MARECHAL RENIER* DID THE TRICK!

Printed in England by Messrs. Percy Brothers Ltd. Manchester 1, and published each month by Fleetway Publications Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C.4. Sole Agents: Australasia, Messrs. Gordon & Gotch Ltd.; South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd.; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Messrs. Kingstons Ltd. War Picture Library is sold subject to the following conditions, that it shall not, without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price as shown on the cover, and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition, or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade, or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. 3/6/61

# ALSO ON SALE NOW

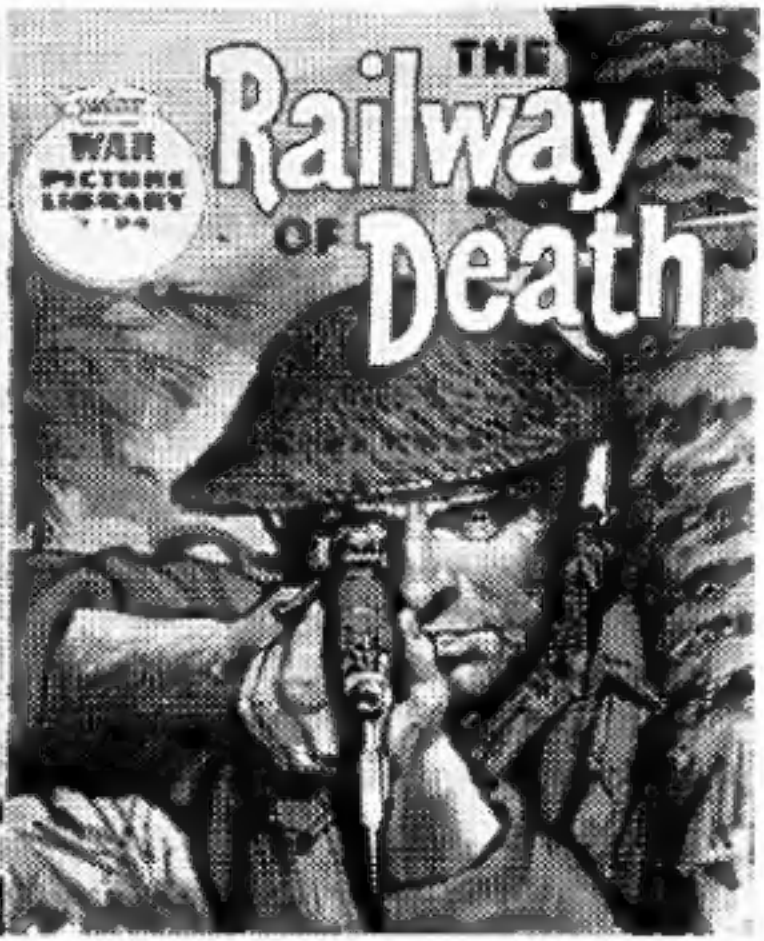
## FOR WAR THRILLS . . . ACTION . . . DRAMA . . .

# WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

**No. 93 FORCE OF ARMS**

The war in the desert demanded much of a soldier—iron endurance, courage and the refusal to admit defeat.

**No. 94 THE RAILWAY OF DEATH**




This is the story of a regiment that lost a battle and yet won for itself honour in captivity.

**ALSO ON SALE NOW :—**

**No. 92 DARK JUDGMENT**

Next month's **FOUR** thrilling **WAR PICTURE LIBRARY** issues, on sale May 1st, are :—

**No. 96 THE THIN BLUE LINE**
**No. 97 LOSER TAKES ALL**
**No. 98 NO MAN'S LAND**
**No. 99 SPEARHEAD**

# On Sale Monday, 17th April

# BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY

**TWO Dramatic Issues Every Month**